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THESIS

INFLATION OF USAF OFFICER PERFORMANCE REPORTS: ANALYZING THE ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

by

Stephane L. Wolfgeher

December 2009

Thesis Advisor: Erik Jansen
Second Reader: Brian Greenshields

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		*Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188*
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and rev the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of inform including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operation Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budg Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.		
1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	**2. REPORT DATE** December 2009	**3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED** Master's Thesis
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Inflation of USAF Officer Performance Reports: Analyzing the Organizational Environment		**5. FUNDING NUMBERS**
6. AUTHOR(S) Stephane L. Wolfgeher		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPO NUMBER**
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		**10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER**
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.		
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited		**12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE**
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)		

The Air Force Officer Evaluation System's purpose is to provide feedback, document a record of performance and potential, and provide centralized selection boards sound information for decision making. Officer Performance Reports are, and have historically been, considered "inflated." This research assumes inflation is counter to the purpose of the evaluation system and investigates why historical inertia towards inflation exists. This is done by viewing the evaluation system as an "open system" and using organization, behavior, evaluation, and game theory to analyze organizational structure, culture, rewards, people, and tasks in U.S. military systems to identify elements that contribute to or inhibit inflation. The structure of the military, military culture, and the role of performance evaluations in the promotion and reward systems all directly support inflation. Changing the evaluation form reduces inflation in the short term, but a whole systems approach must be taken to combat inflation in the long term. While some elements are unlikely to change only to reduce inflation, the analysis suggests the tool must be changed to permit rater accountability, culture must be altered to accept accurate evaluations, and small changes in structure and reward systems might be made to reduce the long-term tendency of evaluation inflation.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Evaluation, Inflation, Officer Performance Report, Officer Evaluation System, OPR, OER, Open System, Congruence in Organizations, Organizational Change, Military Reward Systems		**15. NUMBER OF PAGES** 121
		16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION REPORT Unclassified	**18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE** Unclassified	**19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT** Unclassified	**20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT** UU

i

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**INFLATION OF USAF OFFICER PERFORMANCE REPORTS:
ANALYZING THE ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN INFORMATION OPERATIONS

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iii

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ABSTRACT

The Air Force Officer Evaluation System's purpose is to provide feedback, document a record of performance and potential, and provide centralized selection boards sound information for decision making. Officer Performance Reports are, and have historically been, considered "inflated." This research assumes inflation is counter to the purpose of the evaluation system and investigates why historical inertia towards inflation exists. This is done by viewing the evaluation system as an "open system" and using organization, behavior, evaluation, and game theory to analyze organizational structure, culture, rewards, people, and tasks in U.S. military systems to identify elements that contribute to or inhibit inflation. The structure of the military, military culture, and the role of performance evaluations in the promotion and reward systems all directly support inflation. Changing the evaluation form reduces inflation in the short term, but a whole systems approach must be taken to combat inflation in the long term. While some elements are unlikely to change only to reduce inflation, the analysis suggests the tool must be changed to permit rater accountability, culture must be altered to accept accurate evaluations, and small changes in structure and reward systems might be made to reduce the long-term tendency of evaluation inflation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

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LIST OF TABLES

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACOM	Above Center of Mass
AFI	Air Force Instruction
AFPAM	Air Force Pamphlet
AR	Army Regulation
BARS	Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales
BSC	Biomedical Science Corps
BUPERS	Bureau of Naval Personnel
BUPERSINST	BUPERS Instruction
CMC	Commandant of the Marine Corps
COM	Center of Mass
CPO	Chief Petty Officer
DC	Dental Corps
DNP	Do Not Promote
DP	Definitely Promote
ERS	Evaluation Reporting System
FITREP	Fitness Report
HC	Chaplain Corps
HQDA	Headquarters, Department of the Army
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
JAG	Judge Advocate
LAF	Line of the Air Force
MBO	Management by Objective
MC	Medical Corps
MCO	Marine Corps Order
MLR	Management Level Review
MRO	Marine Reported On
MSC	Medical Service Corps

NAVPERSCOM	Navy Personnel Command
NC	Nurse Corps
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
OER	Officer Evaluation Report
OES	Officer Evaluation System
OPR	Officer Performance Report
OSR	Officer Summary Record
P	Promote
PARS	Performance Anchored Rating Scales
PES	Performance Evaluation System
PFW	Performance Feedback Worksheet
PME	Professional Military Education
PPT	PowerPoint
PRF	Promotion Recommendation Form
PSR	Performance Summary Record
RO	Reviewing Officer
RS	Reporting Senior
SECNAV	Secretary of the Navy
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TIG	Time-in-grade
TR	Training Report
URL	Unrestricted Line
USA	United States Army
USAF	United States Air Force
USG	United States Government
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USN	United States Navy
WAPS	Weighted Airman Promotion System

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take a quick moment to thank a few people who have helped me through this thesis process. First, I want to thank Dr. Erik Jansen, my thesis advisor, for opening my eyes to a wonderful new way of looking at things—"organizational theory" truly does permeate all aspects of the world we live in. I would also like to thank him for allowing me the latitude to take the thesis journey in the way I chose, while also providing me with beacons of light and insight to guide me when I may have meandered off track.

Secondly, I want to thank my second reader, Col. Brian Greenshields, USAF, retired, and all the other NPS officers and faculty who were willing to share their insights, thoughts, and suggestions on an issue with which we are all familiar. More importantly, I want to thank them for letting me prattle on and bounce my thoughts and ideas off them—sometimes such thoughts seem so much better in my mind, and it's the talking process that really morphs half-formed ideas into reality.

Finally and most forcefully, I want to thank my husband, Chris, for his support in my studies and my career. I know it's not easy, and I appreciate all he does. I'm sure my professors will also join me in thanking him for teaching me that "would have might have been" is not an acceptable substitute for "was." His constant critiques on my wordy writing style have hopefully made a difference to my readers …

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I.   INTRODUCTION

A.   BACKGROUND

Each United States military service has an officer evaluation system. Across the services, variance exists on perceptions of respective systems; some officers will state that "their" system is "OK," but most will agree that the evaluation system either is inflated, was inflated (but less so now based on a new system), and/or is subject to manipulation counter to the stated purpose of the system.

Many groups and individuals have looked at the issue of performance evaluation inflation or inadequacy of evaluation systems at some time or another. These people include private organizations, groups comprised of senior military and retired officers, military officers at service-specific schools, military students at civilian universities, and individual officers (e.g., Air Force Human Resources Laboratory, 1971; Blakelock, 1976; Doorley, 1981; Hamilton, 2002; Kite, 1998; Lewis, 1999; Marvin, 1996; Olsen & Oakman, 1979; Robbert, Keltner, Reynolds, Spranca, & Benjamin, 1997; Syllogistics & the Hay Group, 1987; Wayland, 2002; Wharton, 1966). Military services have availed themselves of evaluation expertise from academia, private businesses, and in-house experts. Most research on military evaluation systems has highlighted some form of dissatisfaction with officer evaluation systems and a recurring theme of inflation.

Research has most often focused on the evaluation tool (the evaluation form[s]) and has often revealed officer opinions on satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the system, but it has rarely addressed the organization and environment in which the tool was used. A Syllogistics (1987) report discussed the evaluation tool with respect to organizational culture, but concluded that since the organization was unlikely to change, it would focus on the tool to combat weaknesses in the evaluation process and to enhance the purposes for which the evaluation system was used.

To one extent or another, most research assessed attributes of the evaluation tool studied, actual utilization of the tool (vs. proscribed use of the tool), and offered suggestions for improvement. Evaluation tools were compared against performance measurement theory and, in some cases, it was concluded that the tools lacked relevance or were ineffective for the purpose for which they were used (Doorley, 1981; Kite, 1998; Syllogistics, 1987; Wayland, 2002). Research has addressed concerns about consistency and discriminating capabilities of evaluation systems (both issues often associated with inflation). While evaluation theory states that evaluation systems should have specific goals, such as promotion, growth and development, feedback, assignments, or school selection (but not all simultaneously), military evaluations are often used for all the aforementioned goals. These different goals for a single evaluation tool are generally not compatible.

Even if the tool studied theoretically adhered to evaluation theory principles, implementation of the evaluation system was not consistent with directives. Specifically, when active control measures were in place to reduce inflation in numerical and categorical scoring systems, raters often resorted to writing evaluations based on individual officer career needs as opposed to writing accurate evaluations. For example, in the United States Army (USA), an officer meeting a promotion board would be given an "above center of mass" (ACOM) rating over an officer who deserved the ACOM rating but was not meeting a board (Hamilton, 2002, p. 15). This deliberate choice to write an evaluation based on the situation as opposed to how the rater truly ranked the ratees was a result of ACOM quota controls in place to minimize inflation. In the United States Air Force (USAF), raters have either been pressured to stratify (rank amongst a set or subset of individuals [Milkovich & Boudreau, 1994, p. 177]) an individual or have been told that stratification would not be given; stratification would be given to the individual coming up on a promotion board, regardless of actual rankings.

Various methods to combat inflation have been instituted over the years, some successful, some not. The United States Navy (USN) uses the rater's

overall rating average on a numerical rating system to depict how the rater viewed the ratee. This enables a board to view relative scores. For example, a ratee receiving an average numerical rating of 3.5, with the rater's average at 3.1, shows a relative above-average score, while a 4.6 of 4.8 is below average (Lewis, 1999, p. 38). The rater's average rating scores may also be included into the rater's evaluation as an incentive to adhere to the spirit of the evaluation system. Another method to combat inflation includes formalized training of raters (Milkovich & Boudreau, 1994).

When methods to combat inflation, such as quotas or secret scoring based on rater's section of items on the evaluation form, were implemented, resistance and non-acceptance of the methods were often encountered (Syllogistics, 1987, pp. I-2 – I-5). Finally, one article (Wayland, 2002) suggested that attempting to compare functionally different groups (such as operations, logistics, operations support, intelligence, maintenance, etc.) increased pressure to inflate ratings within the functions to ensure competitiveness at a central promotion board. This suggests that the structure of the military as a large, bureaucratic organization and its processes for individual advancement within the organization may influence individuals to inflate evaluations.

In the review of previous research on the inflation of evaluations, it became clear that each military service has experienced, or is experiencing, inflation. Each service has attempted multiple times to curtail or eliminate evaluation inflation, but none of the research viewed attempted to analyze why the military evaluation systems continually regress to an inflated state. According to Wexley (1979), most performance appraisal research focuses on the tool and methods of evaluation, but neglects the organizational influences that may "reduce the effectiveness of even the finest performance appraisal system" (p. 255). The purpose of this research is to view the Air Force organization and its evaluation system with respect to organization, behavior, evaluation, and game theory to attempt to answer the question of why its evaluations continually regress to an inflated state.

B. RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Assumptions

The two main assumptions for this thesis research are that the USAF Officer Performance Report (OPR) is inflated and that this phenomenon of inflation is dysfunctional and undermines the stability and purpose of the evaluation system. "Inflation" is the exaggerated, hyperbolic, pretentious, amplified, hyped description or scoring of an individual or an individual's accomplishments. An organization or system can still function if it is dysfunctional, but it often does so through alternate processes. It is important to recognize a dysfunctional system so that an organization can take steps to identify and fix the problem or establish controls within the system in order to mitigate the effects of the dysfunctional element(s).

Inflation is assumed dysfunctional based on service statements detailing the stated purpose of the evaluation systems:

> The Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems have varied purposes. The first is to provide meaningful feedback to individuals on what is expected of them, advice on how well they are meeting those expectations, and advice on how to better meet those expectations. The second is to provide a reliable, long-term, cumulative record of performance and potential based on that performance. The third is to provide officer central selection boards, senior NCO evaluation boards, the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS) and other personnel managers sound information to assist in identifying the best qualified officers and enlisted personnel. (USAF, 2005, p. 6)

> The ERS [evaluation reporting system – added] identifies Soldiers who are best qualified for promotion and assignments to positions of greater responsibility. ERS also identifies Soldiers who will be kept on active duty, be retained in grade, or eliminated from Service…The primary function of ERS is to provide information to HQDA for use in making personnel management decisions. This information is supplied to HQDA by the rating chain in the Soldier's assigned or attached organization... Reports that are incomplete or fail to provide a realistic and objective evaluation will make personnel management decisions difficult. (USA, 2007, pp. 2–3)

FITREPs on officers, CHIEFEVALs on chief petty officers (CPOs), and EVALs on other enlisted personnel are used for many career actions, including selection for promotion, advanced training, specialization or sub-specialization, and responsible duty assignments. Timely, realistic, and accurate reports are essential for each of these tasks. (USN, 2008, p. I–1)

The fitness report provides the primary means for evaluating a Marine's performance to support the Commandant's efforts to select the best qualified personnel for promotion, augmentation, retention, resident schooling, command, and duty assignments. The completion of fitness reports is a critical leadership responsibility. Inherent in this duty is the commitment of our commanders and all reporting officials to ensure the integrity of the system by giving close attention to accurate marking, narrative assessment, and timely reporting. Every commander and reporting official must ensure the scrupulous maintenance of the PES [performance evaluation system – added]. Inaccurate evaluations only serve to dilute the actual value of each report. (USMC, 2006, p. 2)

These references demonstrate that the USAF, USA, USN, and the United States Marine Corps (USMC) use these systems in order to make decisions, often at centralized decision-making boards, regarding the advancement of military officers, whether in rank, duty location, or duty responsibilities. This suggests that evaluation systems, and more specifically, the tools used for evaluation, should provide discriminating capability to differentiate organizational members (Wexley, 1997, p. 253). If the information provided is inaccurate, are the decisions valid? If it is recognized that the systems are inflated and thus inaccurate, then it is possible to overcome this issue through informal practices, such as the impact of "specific" words, or the presence or absence of specific information, such as stratification or completion of advanced degrees. It is possible, but not easy; it is possible, but contingent on everyone understanding the informal practices. This thesis does not investigate the question of whether the right people are being put in the right positions (through promotion and job allocation), but only focuses on why inflation happens.

2. Variables

For the purposes of research, the dependent variable is the quality of officer evaluations. This dependent variable is either inflated or accurate. The independent variables are the organizational structure of the military organization, officer-specific reward system, system of officer promotion, officer evaluation tools and processes, military culture, and the human element.

3. Hypothesis

The organizational structure of the military, officer-specific reward system, processes and tools of evaluation, promotion system, organizational culture, and the interaction between individuals influence personnel to inflate evaluations over time. Addressing the root cause of organizational factors and/or implementing controls on known factors in the various tools for evaluation would reduce the inertia towards evaluation inflation. In addition, addressing one element is insufficient to stem inflation; it requires a "whole of system" approach.

4. Design and Methodology

This research takes a novel view of the USAF evaluation system to assess whether factors inherent in the organization are responsible for continued inflation of officer evaluations. Its purpose is not to create a new system of evaluation, and it does not focus on military officers' perceptions of any system. Instead, this research focuses on: (a) structure and congruity from the perspective of organization theory; (b) the purposes of evaluations and the advantages and disadvantages of evaluation systems from the perspective of evaluation theory; (c) the position of an individual in an organization and how interactions occur within that system from the perspective of behavior theory; and (d) the choice selection made by rational actors within a system from the dynamic perspective of game theory.

Subsystems in the U.S. military organization are explored from each theoretical perspective. The independent variables are analyzed through these theories to highlight those subsystems that influence evaluation inflation. After the U.S. military is viewed as a whole, service-specific systems are compared to look at similarities, differences, and controls inherent in their systems.

The research map is as follows:

- Chapter II focuses on organizations, systems, and subsystems. It details elements of the military organization that are similar across the services. It ties elements of theory, especially organizational and behavior theory, to systems and subsystems in the larger military organization.

- Chapter III briefly explores evaluation theory and delves into how the respective services execute their evaluation system. As there is a direct connection between evaluations and promotion systems in the military (Robbert et al., 1997, p. 15), and as each service has a slightly different way of implementing their promotion system, service-specific promotion systems are also analyzed.

- Chapter IV analyzes the independent variables of organizational structure, reward systems, officer promotions, officer evaluations, military culture, and the human element to demonstrate how each of these subsystems influence inflation.

- Chapter V wraps up with a conclusion based on the analysis of the variables and recommendations on how to proceed. Two main issues raised are: (a) if the system is functional, does it necessarily need to change? And, (b) in order to change, multiple subsystems (or elements in the evaluation system) must be changed to counter the inertia of the system towards inflation. Additional research topics that might be complementary to this research subject are also recommended.

This research focuses on the following sources for information:

- Theoretical writings on organization, behavior, evaluation, and game theory

- Previous military evaluation research

- Government rules and regulations on military officers, their promotion, and extrinsic compensation

- Service-specific standard operating procedures (rules and regulations)
- Personal interviews with senior military officers to clarify formal processes and to unearth informal processes

II.   ORGANIZATIONS, SYSTEMS, AND SUBSYSTEMS

A.   OPEN SYSTEM VIEW

One can take two approaches when looking at any system—viewing the system as a "black box" or as a "white box." A black-box approach takes the system as a whole, without seeking to understand the individual elements or processes within. It is an abstract view and more appropriate when looking at macro level analysis. It focuses on the input and the output, without regard for the transformation processes (or internal environment) that transform inputs into outputs. A white-box approach is concerned with the processes that transform inputs into outputs. It focuses on the interaction between the individual subsystems or elements (Heylighen, 1998).

Because the research hypothesis states that inflation within the evaluation system is caused by elements, or subsystems, within the system, it is proper to view the system as a white box and to investigate the elements within the system and their interactions with each other.   The model depicted in Figure 1 conceptualizes evaluations as a system within a greater military environment, with inputs, a transformation process (containing the subsystems of organizational structure, culture, tasks/tools, people, and reward systems), and an output. The evaluation system itself is just one subsystem in the greater military system. In addition, the subsystems of structure, culture, tasks/tools, people, and rewards also reside as subsystems inside the greater military system. For conceptualization, the evaluation system is viewed as a concrete system with subsystems that affect the transformation process. Each subsystem within the transformation process interacts with every other subsystem; structure affects culture, culture affects people, people affect tasks, etc.
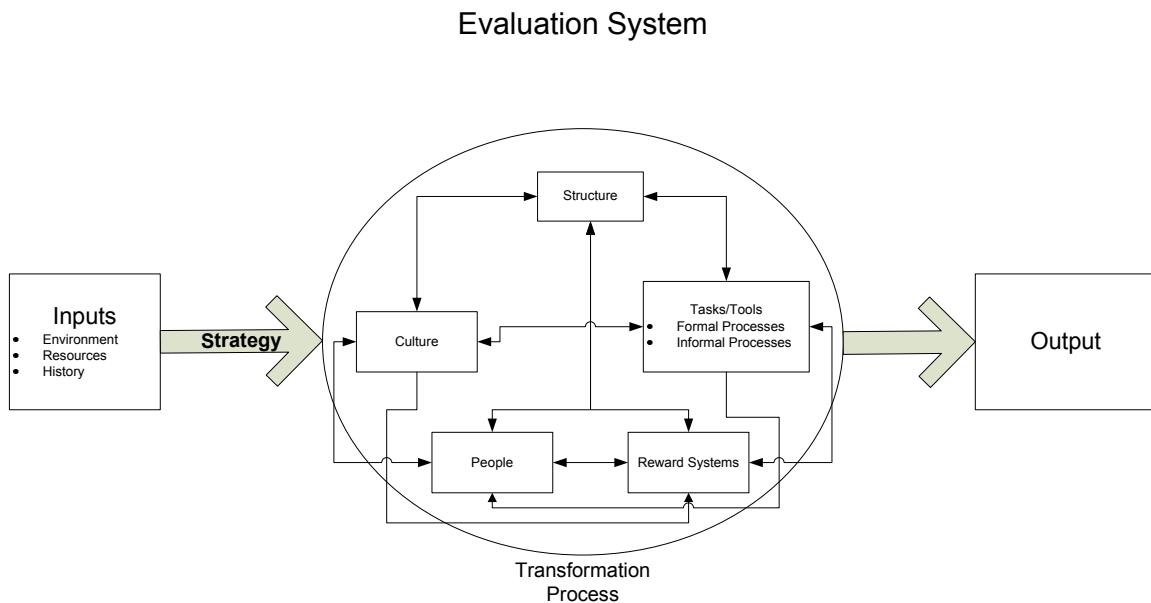
Evaluation System

Figure 1.   Open System View of the Evaluation System (After Kates & Galbraith, 2007; Mercer-Delta, 1998; Nadler & Tushman, 1988, 1997)

Each subsystem is studied to assess whether it affects evaluation quality in some form or another. This chapter addresses subsystems that are similar across the services. Service-specific aspects of strategy and tasks (such as the completion of evaluations and the processes of promotion) are addressed in the next chapter.

B.   INPUTS

Nadler and Tushman (1997) divide inputs into three major categories: environment, resources, and history. While the traditional environment of a system includes other institutions, events, social and economic forces, and legal constraints, the only environmental factor applicable in this study of the evaluation system is governmental regulatory guidelines. These regulatory guidelines place demands and impose constraints on military strength.

The United States Government (USG) Title 10 (armed forces) codes 115 and 115a (2007) state that Congress must authorize military strength levels

yearly. The Secretary of Defense must submit annual manpower requirements, broken down into service and major force units, delineating the required force strength per rank/grade for commissioned officers. The request must be further broken down into end-of-quarter strength requirements in addition to end of year strength requirements. In conjunction with the request for manpower, the Secretary must also estimate upcoming changes in the force structure based on projected retirements, discharges, separations, deaths, and promotions for the upcoming fiscal year and five fiscal years out.

Congress further authorizes (Title 10, sec. 523, 2007) the breakdown of the officer corps into authorized strength levels per grade based on the total force strength. Provisions exist for deviations from congressionally mandated numbers. Regardless, the governmental laws dictating the size and distribution of the military forces are an environmental input in to the evaluation system and affect the interaction of the various subsystems.

Resources include people, technology, and information input into a system. While it may also include an organization's perception or climate, this analysis subsumes these under the internal element of culture. The people that go into the system are the individuals being evaluated; as everyone in the military is evaluated, every person will eventually be an input into the evaluation system.

The final input element is the history of a system (or organization). As was discussed in the introduction, the history and evolution of evaluation systems have shown that they generally revert to an inflated state. This history also affects the people and the cultural element. History, or institutional memory, can be a constant input into the evaluation system as a barrier to change or as a driving force back to the previous state (inflation).

C.   STRATEGY

Strategy involves a set of decisions on how to manage resources within the context of demands, opportunities, and constraints posed by the environment, consistent with an organization's history and culture (Mercer-Delta, 1998, p. 6).   The strategy of the evaluation system is service-specific and contained within each service specific standard operating procedure (SOP) manual.

D.   STRUCTURE

It would be hard to dispute that the U.S. military is anything other than a bureaucracy in a divisional structure. There are, however, elements of other organizational structures contained within the military.   The military, at the operational level of analysis (that which occurs in the middle levels of each service), is more of a professional machine, as described below.

An accurate description of the elements of an organization is important in order to see how parts interact with each other and how they influence operations within an organization.   It is also important to understand that at different levels of analysis, an organization changes; those "structural" changes have inherent advantages and disadvantages.

Mintzberg (1981) stated there are five distinct, coherent configurations in organizational structure: simple configuration, adhocracy, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, and divisional (or diversified).   Each configuration has certain characteristics and specific dominant features.   Each configuration also has an environment in which it optimally operates.   These configurations are chosen because their separate parts function effectively together in the environment in which they are optimal.

The defined configurations of Mintzberg's structures are made up of five distinct elements: the strategic apex, the operating core, the middle line, the technostructure, and the support staff.   The apex is the top management; the

operating core does the basic work; the middle line is the intermediate managers; the technostructure does formal planning and controls the work; and the support staff provides indirect services to the rest of the organization. The variances in organization of these elements make up the five distinct core structures.

The environment in which an organization operates optimally can be defined with regard to the level of stability and complexity of that environment. Figure 2 shows the arrangement:
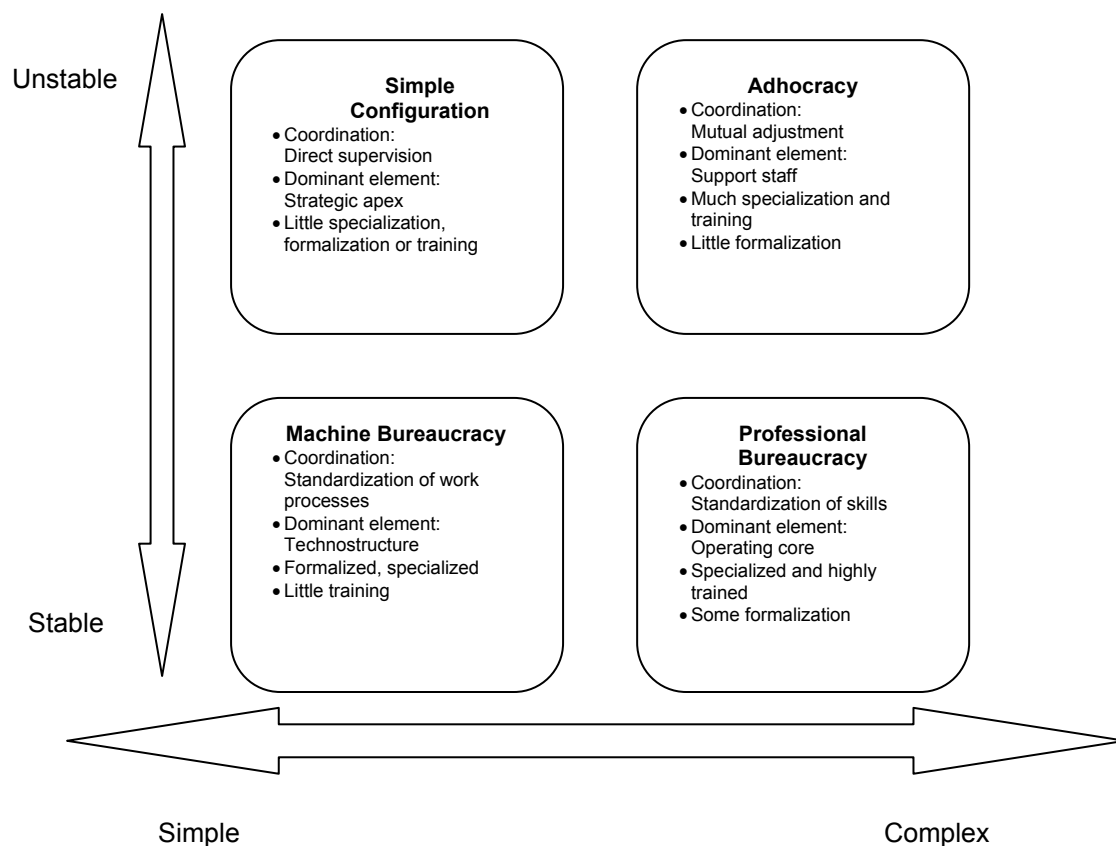

Figure 2.   Mintzberg's Basic Organization Structures (After Mintzberg, 1981)

A machine bureaucracy is optimal in a stable, simple environment. Stable refers to an environment that remains predictable, whereas unstable involves rapid change in the environment. A simple environment is one where there are

few or similar external factors affecting the organization, whereas a complex environment has many or diverse, interdependent external factors (Daft, 1998, p. 88). A professional bureaucracy is optimal in a stable, complex environment.

In the context of the evaluation system, the environment is stable. The evaluation system operates in a semi-complex environment where there are many diverse external factors, such as people, different units within the larger organization, different operations/tasks that occur, and different sub-cultures. A brief synopsis of element characteristics of a bureaucracy is depicted in Table 1.

Characteristics	Machine Bureaucracy	Professional Bureaucracy	Evaluation System (Professional Machine)
Coordination within the organization	SOPs	Standardization of Skills	Combination of both
Training and indoctrination	Little	Much	Much
Formalization of behavior	Formal	Little	Formal and Informal
Span of Control	Small span of control throughout until intersection w/operating core	Large span of control	Large span of control for reporting elements
Planning and control systems	Large amounts	Little	Large amounts
Decentralization	Some horizontal decentralization	Horizontally and vertically decentralized	Selective horizontal and vertical decentralization; output feeds a centralized system

Table 1.   Characteristics of Bureaucratic Structures (After Mintzberg, 1981)

Mintzberg (1981) describes the characteristics associated with the structural organization and explains how different parts interact with each other. Coordination within an organization refers to how the strategic apex maintains control of an organization based on its goals and how it achieves unity of effort. A machine bureaucracy is optimized for mass production with products, processes, and distribution systems following standard procedures. The military is full of functional specialties that rely on SOPs to ensure jobs are (at an abstract level) the same, no matter where you are stationed (an F-16 mechanic in Aviano AB, Italy, is the same as an F-16 mechanic at Hill AFB, Utah; a personnelist at

the Presido in Monterey, CA, does the same job as a personnelist at Cannon AFB, NM). This is essential due to the nature of the military, where people move around much more often than is experienced in the civilian world.

Within a professional bureaucracy, the environment is much more complex (yet still stable) and the operating core receives considerably more training and requires control over the actual tasks. Professional bureaucracies are often associated with hospitals or universities. Each person in the operating core receives a commensurate level of training, is expected to meet certain standards, and must attain certain certifications. The strategic apex relies on the standardization of skills in order to realize the organization's goals. The military, too, is like the professional bureaucracy in that both enlisted and officers receive extensive training in order to accomplish their tasks. They are professionals that are educated and expected to exhibit judgment outside SOPs in order to make decisions based on encountered situations.

The evaluation "organization" is effectively a mesh of the two types of organizations. There are SOPs that dictate when and how to accomplish the task, but the system still relies on professional military officers to use their training and judgment to accomplish the task. At the next highest level, the organization is a divisional structure (not shown in Figure 2), relying on standardization of output from each division. The divisional structure is a hollow structure that contains other sub-structures. Its coordination is done primarily through the standardization of outputs, and its dominant element is the middle line, the managers of the individual sub-organizations. Each military element (such as a squadron, wing, battalion, etc.) is a division that should optimally provide standardized evaluations to the higher levels, so that decisions about personnel can be made at a centralized location.

Training, indoctrination, and formalization are all about how a worker receives guidance on how to accomplish a task. Formalization is most often associated with SOPs; training is most often associated with professionalism. Indoctrination can be used in either case. In the evaluation system, and even in

15

the military as a whole, training, indoctrination, and formalization are all present. The military standardizes and formalizes the evaluation processes because evaluations are used at a centralized decision-making board for promotion, assignment, or some other human resource decision. By standardizing these processes, it theoretically makes it easier to compare evaluations across disparate groups of officers. The people involved in the evaluation process are trained professional officers and trained support staff. Additionally, the military carries out indoctrination throughout an officer's career, whether it is prior to commissioning, while assigned in individual units, or in various professional schools throughout. This indoctrination naturally affects the culture and the individuals involved in the system.

Span of control (Daft, 2004) is the number of people directly reporting to the next level of the organization. In a machine bureaucracy, this is generally small until the management intersects with the operating core. In a professional bureaucracy, it is much higher, resulting in a flatter organization. In the evaluation system, it depends on where the evaluations are accomplished. With different spans of control, different officers are directly compared against different types and numbers of officers, depending on where the evaluation is done. A rater that rates only one officer has a different situation than a rater who rates 15 officers of the same rank.

The planning and control of systems all allude to future states within the organization. Planning is generally associated with standardization (exactly how things are done), whereas control refers to a more generalized state (such as growth or profit). The evaluation system plans and controls the elements within the system. Evaluations are done on a timescale and are used to make decisions about future states of the larger military organization, such as force strength or job positions, often based on the "environment" input of government law.

Centralization is broken into two aspects: vertical and horizontal. Vertical centralization (or decentralization) is the allocation of decision making.

Horizontal centralization (or decentralization) is control over the decision processes vice the actual decisions. In a machine bureaucracy, the technostructure is given some authority to control processes (limited horizontal decision making); in a professional bureaucracy, decisions and decision processes are decentralized both vertically and horizontally. In the evaluation system, there is selective decentralization both horizontally and vertically. Decision processes are standardized within the technostructure (horizontally), yet decisions made in the evaluations are devolved down the organizational line to the people most closely associated with the ones being evaluated. Credible evaluations from the highest levels on the lowest levels are unlikely due to the size of the military organization and the lack of direct observation. The decentralized evaluations are then funneled up to a centralized location for decisions regarding promotions, assignments, or other crucial determinations.

Within the overall structure, there are two sub elements: formal arrangement and informal arrangement. Mercer-Delta (1998) describes the formal arrangement as the formal structures and processes to coordinate activities to accomplish objectives. These are structures and processes detailed in service specific regulations. The informal arrangements are process practices and political relationships. These informal practices are the "word of mouth," best practices, and mentorship training that military members receive regarding evaluations throughout their career; more informally, this is how things "are really done." These elements of structure and task accomplishment are service-specific and are discussed in the next chapter.

E. REWARD SYSTEMS

People join organizations and are motivated based on the rewards they expect to receive. Rewards can be categorized into two types: intrinsic and extrinsic. Both types of rewards are useful in satisfying Maslow's hierarchy of needs (physiological, safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization [Lawler, 1973]).

1. Intrinsic Rewards/Motivation

Intrinsic motivation occurs when "people are interested in, and enjoy, what they are doing" (Cameron & Pierce, 2002, p. 12). Intrinsic rewards include affiliation, equity, mental/physical stimulation, achievement, competence, self-growth, and self-actualization (Lawler, 1973, pp. 16–25). In the military, intrinsic rewards include: service to one's country; the performance of exciting and interesting missions; work with advanced, sophisticated, and expensive equipment; teamwork with like-minded individuals; advancement to higher levels of responsibility; and the pride of military membership (Robbert et al., 1997, p. 14). These elements are also often associated with the culture of the military.

2. Extrinsic Rewards/Motivation

Extrinsic rewards are those rewards that are tangible outcomes given to an employee. Extrinsic motivation comes from "behaviors in which an external controlling variable can be readily identified" (Cameron & Pierce, 2002, p. 12). These can be based on position or specific accomplishments. Lawler (2000, p. 112) describes the importance of rewards to different people. In some cases, pay is the most important motivating incentive. In other cases, pay is not important and socializing is more motivating. In civilian organizations, managers attempt to link rewards to what motivates their people. In civilian organizations, rewards are often tied to organizational results (such as profit). Civilian organizations generally have more latitude to decentralize the application of their reward systems and may have greater variability in the rewards they are able to offer.

The military, as a bureaucratic organization, is limited in the ways that it uses variance in extrinsic rewards to motivate its people. Military compensation can be categorized as "task non-contingent rewards," (Cameron & Pierce, 2002, p. 43) where it is given regardless of involvement in a specific activity or a specific level of accomplishment of an activity. The military does not have definitive goals on which to base compensation; the military does not exist to

make a profit and goals such as "making the country safe" or "furthering U.S. objectives" are non-quantifiable for the purposes of extrinsic compensation. The military uses a standardized system of compensation and each service member receives the same extrinsic rewards for serving in the military. It has a neutral reward system where everyone of a certain characteristic (rank) receives the same reward (Kerr, 1997, p. xvii). The difference in these rewards is based solely on grade (rank), time-in-grade, special pay for specific skills, or in compensation for assignment at specific geographic locations. Eligibility for these rewards is not based on the quality of one's evaluation, nor is it dependent on whether the military organization "accomplishes" its goals. The following are examples of extrinsic rewards for military members (Robbert et al., 1997, pp. 10–12):

- Pay and allowances (base pay, housing, subsistence)

- Paid vacation (leave) (2 ½ days per month)

- Special pay (flight, hazardous, separation, sea duty, foreign language, retention bonuses, etc.)

- Access to services (childcare, housing, commissary, exchange, health [medical and dental])

- Additional opportunities (education assistance, GI Bill, professional military education)

- Retirement benefits (after completing 20 years of service)

Promotion selection affects the rewards received by a military member; the promotion system uses evaluations (in addition to other variables) to determine who should be promoted, and therefore, receive greater compensation and status (Robbert et al., 1997, pp. 15–16).

Overall, motivation of military members is not as influenced by extrinsic rewards as the private sector due to the inability to increase pay, give bonuses, or expect promotion, except as mandated by Congress through force strength and limitations on grade quotas (Robbert et al., 1997). In fact, Robbert et al. (1997) posit that military members are more motivated by intrinsic over extrinsic rewards (p. 14). Based on the standardization of compensation, military

members view it as a means to satisfy basic needs (Maslow – physiological and security). As part of Robbert's (2007) assessment of military human resource management (HRM), focus groups were conducted about rewards and their affect on work. Pay was rated an average of 2.27 on a scale of 1 ("had no effect on your work") to 4 ("had a large effect on your work"), where "feeling like a valued and respected member of your unit" was rated as 3.24 out of 4. This was considered significant, with $p < .05$ (p. 73). While the sample size was small, it is consistent with perceptions of military culture.

The military reward system is not considered causal to evaluation inflation because 1) compensation happens after the fact, and 2) because evaluations affect promotion, which then affects only certain aspects of compensation. The expectation that good evaluations will help promotion selection influences the inflation of evaluations.

Awards and decorations bridge the gap between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. There is no physical compensation related to it; however, it is overt recognition by leadership of one's accomplishments, and continued recognition through visible devices (ribbons and/or medals) with other military members. In addition, awards and decorations may affect promotion selection (Robbert et al., 1997, pp. 15 & 17).

3.   Promotion

Promotion affects extrinsic compensation (directly) and may contain an element of intrinsic value. Promotion also affects whether an officer may remain in the military to complete a career with retirement benefits. While ultimately governed by the USG, the actual promotion system is service-specific.

USG code states that the Secretary of any military department will hold promotion boards when the needs of the service requires (Title 10, sec. 611, 2007). The board will be comprised of officers representative of the officers being considered for promotion (sec. 612, 2007). Officers will be evaluated

solely on their records, any specific elements a service determines is important (after approval by the Secretary of Defense), and any authorized written communication from the individual to the board (sec. 615, 2007). Individuals must serve a specific amount of time-in-grade before being eligible for promotion (sec. 619). Individual services will determine competitive categories (sec. 621, 2007). The Secretary of the military service will determine the number of officers eligible for promotion to the next rank based on the force strength and limitations on numbers of each rank, as approved by Congress, as well as the number of officers eligible to meet the promotion zone, based on a five-year forecast (sections 622 & 623, 2007). In addition, the promotion board is limited from promoting officers below the zone by a specific percentage (sec. 616, 2007). Once selected for promotion, officers are promoted when there is need for that target rank and competitive category from the promotion list (sec. 624, 2007). The promotion system is a standardized, formalized process.

If an O–2 is not selected for promotion after two looks, he/she will be involuntarily discharged or retired (if eligible) (sec. 631, 2007). If an O–3 or O–4 fails to promote after two looks (while in or above the promotion zone), he/she will be involuntarily discharged or retired (if eligible) (sec. 632, 2007). O–5s who are not promoted must retire at 28 years of service (sec. 633, 2007). O–6s who do not promote must retire at 30 years of service (sec. 634, 2007). The military system uses, at its core, an "up or out" system of promotion.

While the system is "up or out," a special continuation board may determine (based on the needs of the services) that members passed over for promotion may remain on active duty until 20 years (for O–3s, unless they subsequently promote) or 24 years (for O–4s, unless they subsequently promote) (sec. 637, 2007). Based on the needs of the military and its ability to attain its desired force strength, some members are selected to remain on active duty and become eligible for retirement at 20 years.

In addition, if Congress mandates reduction in the size of the military, the services can convene special boards to select officers for early retirement or for

discharge, regardless if they promoted or not (sec. 647, 2007). This was done recently in the AF during their 2006 and 2007 force shaping initiatives (Gettle, 2006) and in the 1990s (Government Accounting Office, 1993) for the entire military.

The military reward and promotion systems are highly standardized, highly controlled, and centrally managed. When variable extrinsic reward systems are not available to influence behavior in an organization, managers turn to "organizational missions" or "culture" to enforce compliance and create cohesiveness (Wilson, 2000).

F. CULTURE

Culture and its effects on individuals are difficult to quantify. It varies between individuals and it varies within elements and sub-elements of an organization. What is culture and why is it important?

Soeters, Winslow, and Weibull (2003) state that culture is a common interpretation of the environment, where ideas, interpretations, and norms are taken for granted. Sathe (1985) states that culture is often unstated assumptions that members share in common. Military culture defines how things are done in the military organization. It includes its values, customs, traditions, and philosophical underpinnings. This culture creates an environment where there are common expectations in standards of behavior, discipline, teamwork, loyalty, selfless duty, and customs that support those elements (Dorn, Graves, Ulmer, Collins, & Jacobs, 2000, p. xviii).

Culture is what managers try to instill into their organization. Culture to an organization is what a personality is to an individual (Schein, 2004, pp. 7–8). Once an organization has a specific culture, it is hard to change. Each organization will attempt to pass on that culture to the next generation (Schein, 2004, pp. 14, 18).

The military itself is often viewed as a separate social phenomenon, a separate social institution that has a distinctive set of behaviors, rules, norms, and values (Nuciari, 2003, p. 61). Each military service has its own set of norms and values. Even within each service, sub-elements have their own specific set of norms and values. The most obvious signs of military culture are the stated values: *Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do* (USAF, n.d.); *Honor, Courage, Commitment* (USN, n.d. [included USMC]); and *Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage* (USA, n.d.). This is what the military advertises, what it attempts to instill into its people, and what the public perceives. Robbert et al. (1997) link military culture to service, duty, patriotism, integrity, trust, and the belief of the importance of the organization with a noble purpose (p. 38). Dorn et al. (2000, p. 5) states, at a higher level, that military culture is imbued with loyalty to comrades, unit, and nation.

Culture also has external influences. The general public's perception and opinion of the military influences how the military views itself and how it strives to uphold those external perceptions. Gallup (Saad, 2009) has conducted its "Confidence in Institutions" polls continuously since 1973. The U.S. military has consistently ranked either number one or number two since it began and has been number one continuously since 1998. It is obvious from the sample that the public has a high opinion of the U.S. military. Military members are continuously reminded of their role as "ambassadors of the military," both on- and off-duty.

Dorn et al. (2000) conducted a survey of Army, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and senior joint task force staffs over how members felt about their organization. Some important elements to take away from this survey were that there was intrinsic satisfaction from being in the armed forces, individuals were proud of serving, individuals were proud of their high standards of behavior and performance, and there was a strong personal commitment to duty. Within the focus groups conducted, there was strong commitment to excellence and strong

support for traditional military values. Individuals truly felt that the military culture reinforced the idea that military service is a "unique calling and a solemn responsibility" (pp. 47–48).

G. PEOPLE

Other subsystems in the evaluation system greatly affect the people subsystem. Organizational culture influences people. Through that, they tend to embody a specific set of institutional values that ultimately affect their decision making (Oliver, 1991).

Each person in the organization occupies a place in the structure, or hierarchy. Most important to this research is the place held as a supervisor (or rater) and as a subordinate (a ratee). The supervisor is subject to the formal and informal processes established in order to function within the evaluation system. Supervisors have responsibilities both to their supervisors and to their subordinates. Military officers are inculcated with the responsibility to take care of their people. This is in addition to the culture of loyalty to one's comrades.

As a ratee, an individual is aware of the importance of evaluations with respect to one's career. People receive both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards in the military. The value of those types of rewards can be changed through interaction with the promotion system. As a participant on both sides of the evaluation (rater and ratee), an individual is aware of interactions of various subsystems within the greater evaluation system.

People, more importantly, are not a static subsystem within the evaluation system, but make dynamic choices based on their culture and value system, their location within the structure of the organization, and their understanding of the importance of interaction between various subsystems. Their dynamic choices, and how they relate to inflation, are further explored in Chapter IV.

III. SERVICE-SPECIFIC EVALUATION AND PROMOTION SYSTEMS

While there are many similarities in the subsystems of the evaluation system in each military service (such as the overarching structure, culture, people, and reward systems), the services are given the freedom to decide how to evaluate and promote within their individual services. This chapter briefly discuses evaluation theory and then lays out the formal and informal processes that each service uses in its respective evaluation and promotion systems, along with the specific tools and tasks used to accomplish them.

The systems covered only affect officers from the grades of O–1 to O–6. Evaluations and promotions above this grade can be subject to different procedures. In addition, exceptions to procedures are not detailed. The structures and tasks detailed are standard operations.

A. EVALUATION THEORY

Evaluation theory has been investigated throughout the history of service evaluation renovations. The purpose of this research is not to evaluate the individual forms with respect to evaluation theory, but rather, to show how elements of evaluation theory (and how they are implemented) affect the decision to inflate.

Evaluations, or performance measures, support the organization's HRM or human resource (HR) activities. These activities include providing feedback, allocating rewards, maintaining the HR system, and creating documentation as justification for further actions, such as promotion or discharges (Milkovich & Boudreau, 1994, p. 166; Syllogistics, 1987, p. III-3). While Syllogistics (1987) assessed that civilian organizations were primarily using performance appraisals for compensation, counseling, and training development, and not for promotion, manpower planning, or retention/discharge decisions, performance appraisals

are very much core to the military system of promotion, manpower planning, and retention/discharge decisions (in conjunction with the promotion system).

Theoretically, any system of evaluation should meet certain criteria, if only to establish legitimacy. A system should be valid; what a system evaluates and what it is used for should be congruent. If an evaluation is used for promotion, it should be able to evaluate indicators that are most likely to predict success in subsequent levels of responsibility. If the evaluation is used to document desired performance, then the tool should include elements of the desired performance. For example, if teamwork is desired, but individual effort is evaluated and rewarded, individuals will do what is evaluated and rewarded vice what is desired (Kerr, 1995, p.12).

According to evaluation theory, a system should be reliable; the system should provide consistent measures of what is being evaluated. Given a specific skill or characteristic, with little variation, an evaluation should be consistent if rated multiple times by the same individual or across multiple individuals.

A system should be acceptable; it should be accepted by both the raters and the ratees, and it should be congruent with the culture of the organization. If military culture breeds people whose perception is that of excellence, then an evaluation system that uses a forced distribution—placing people in "average" or "below average" categories—may not be accepted. More importantly, the perception may be that anyone who receives an "average" rating is not competitive for promotion.

Finally, a system should be practical. It should be easy to implement, administer, maintain, and not be excessive in either cost or time (Syllogistics, 1987).

Evaluations can measure a large number of variables such as skills, abilities, traits, behaviors, or results. What it evaluates depends on the purpose of the evaluation (promotion or compensation) and the organization's stated goals. Due to the diverse nature of the jobs in the military, an appropriate

method of evaluation for one unit or occupation may be inappropriate for another. Because of the centralized structure of the military, officers of different specialties are often evaluated against one another. The military is "forced" to use a standardized form to facilitate this process. Unfortunately, finding a form that is optimal for all may not be feasible.

There are various methods of evaluation, each having their own advantages, disadvantages, optimum environments, and each susceptible to misuse or abuse. They will only briefly be described, but more information can be found in the abundance of evaluation literature. Methods can be categorized as objective, subjective, or other (Milkovich & Boudreau, 1994; Syllogistics, 1987). Objective methods rely on direct measures to evaluate a person (Syllogistics, 1987, p. III-8). Objective methods are not supposed to be influenced by feelings or interpretations, but rather, based on facts. They are most useful in situations related to production, profits, or other repetitive jobs where individuals can be evaluated against quantifiable details, such as production numbers or profit measures. It is a useful tool for current performance, but does not necessarily predict future performance or potential. Objective methods are generally not appropriate for a majority of officer evaluations based on typical officer responsibilities.

Subjective methods rely on the judgment or opinion of the evaluator (Syllogistics, 1987, p. III-8). While those judgments or opinions may be partially based on objective measures, the evaluation relies on the rater's perception of the ratee in a broader sense. Especially when using subjective methods, training of evaluators is important to ensure the correct use of the tool. Subjective methods include (Milkovich & Boudreau, 1994; Syllogistics, 1987):

- Rating scales: characteristics or traits are scored on some graphic scale
- Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS): a more specific offshoot of rating scales where examples of behaviors are given for each rating to reduce ambiguity of the meaning of specific words such as "average," "excellent," or "outstanding"

- Checklists: lists of behavioral statements that are "checked" if observed by the evaluator

- Forced distribution: evaluators are forced to rate employees in fixed "bins" such as "below average," "average," or "excellent"

- Ranking: evaluator must rank employees from top to bottom based on some criterion

- Essay: evaluator writes an essay (or bullet points) about an employee's performance

Other methods include management by objective (MBO) and 360° evaluations. MBO and 360° feedback® can both be considered subjective methods as they do rely on rater perception of a ratee or a ratee's accomplishments. MBO is a goal oriented management tool that establishes individual goals (a contract, if you will) for each employee, against which they are later evaluated. It is highly useful for development and assessment of strengths and weaknesses, but very limited in use for promotion, as it does not provide performance indicators (Syllogistics, 1987).

Edwards and Ewen (1996) describe 360° feedback®[1] evaluations as a way to incorporate evaluations from all levels around an employee, using his/her subordinates, peers, and supervisors. This process was developed in order to counter perceived supervisor-only evaluation problems such as biases; politics, favoritism, and friendship relationships between evaluator and employee; the unwillingness of supervisors to confront or disclose poor performance on evaluations; and the difference between supervisor's preferences and abilities when completing evaluations, especially when promotion or pay decisions are centralized. Overall, supervisor-only evaluations tend to be inflated, show less distinction among criteria, and show less distinction among people. When adding in a second level (above direct supervisor) to the evaluations, the second level evaluation was less accurate as compared with other respondents. Edwards and Ewen (1996) provide a comprehensive study on the benefits of

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[1] 360° feedback® is a registered trademark of TEAMS, Inc.

360° evaluations, and effectively counter the arguments against using them only for development and not advancement or pay decisions, and counter the argument of these systems as time consuming and susceptible to inflation. As with all the systems discussed, proper implementation with appropriate controls to mitigate disadvantages are needed in order to have an effective system. Table 2 summarizes evaluation methods.

Evaluation Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Rating	• Evaluates against standards • Shows variation	• Subject to inflation and biases
BARS	• Evaluates against standards • Shows variation • Optimum when specifically tailored to homogenous groups	• Subject to inflation and biases • Expensive to develop
Checklist	• Shows presence or absence of traits/characteristics • Ability to weight traits/characteristics	• Does not show variation or levels of differentiation
Forced Distribution	• Recognizes high and low performers	• Does not account for abnormal or skewed distributions • Difficult with small groups • May conflict with culture of organization
Ranking	• Recognizes high and low performers	• Sends a "competitive" message to employees (may be counter-culture) • Not useful for comparing across diverse groups
Essay	• Does not constrain rater • Good observation capabilities • Good in dynamic situations or occupations	• Depends on writer's ability • Depends on what rater deems important • Difficult to compare across groups
MBO	• Good in dynamic situations or occupations • Promotes rater/ratee interaction	• Does not highlight performance indicators • Difficult to compare across groups
360°	• Multiple perspectives on an individual • Less prone to inflation	• May be time consuming/costly to implement • Perceived usurpation of supervisors responsibilities

Table 2.   Summary and Comparison of Subjective Performance Assessment Techniques

No one specific method is used exclusively in the military (service-specific) evaluation systems. Each service has, over time, experimented with many of the methods described. Not every change was due to inflation, but many were. The next section analyzes each service system to look at specific strategies, structure, tasks (formal and informal processes), and tools (the evaluation form) to illustrate interactions between subsystems within the evaluation system.

B.   USAF

Daft (1998, p. 46) describes an organization's goals as where it wants to go and its strategy as to how it gets there. The goal of the USAF officer evaluation system (OES) (USAF, 2005) is threefold: to provide feedback to officers regarding what is expected, how well they are performing, and how to perform better in the future; to provide a "reliable, long-term, cumulative record of performance and potential based on that performance" (p. 6); and to provide promotion boards sound information on which to base promotion decisions. The strategy used to accomplish these goals is through a system of formal structures and processes, informal practices, and task accomplishment.

While this section describes current AF structures, processes, and tools, the concept for the system has effectively remained the same over the history of the AF. The purpose of looking at these elements is to identify characteristics that contribute to the inflation of evaluations.

1.   Officer Evaluation System (OES)

The OES is made up of three distinct formal processes: feedback, performance reports, and promotion recommendations. Supervisors (raters) accomplish these processes on the people they supervise (ratees). First time supervisors are required to receive training in the processes within 60 days of entering into a supervisory position (USAF, 2005). Refresher training is at the discretion of the installation commander. Per AFI, training is required; whether or not training is accomplished is not necessarily scrutinized.

Feedback is accomplished in accordance with AFI 36–2406, *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems* (USAF, 2005) and is documented using the AF form 724 (AF724 – Performance Feedback Worksheet [PFW]). This form is a guide to facilitate communication between the rater and ratee. The AF724 does not become an official part of any personnel records and is designed to create a permissive opportunity to frankly discuss expectations, progress, and to make further recommendations (career counseling). Per AFI 36–2406 (USAF, 2005), Lieutenants through Captains (O–1 – O–3) are required to received initial, midterm, and follow up feedback (following a performance report); Majors through Lieutenant Colonels (O–4 – O–5) are required to receive initial and midterm feedback; and Colonels (O–6) are only required to receive initial feedback counseling. The OES training guide (HQ AFPC/DPSIDE, 2009), however, states that Colonels will also receive follow up feedback.

Feedback sessions are mandatory, but non-accomplishment of feedback does not invalidate subsequent evaluations or promotion recommendations. The rater's rater ensures the rater accomplishes feedback in accordance with the AFI and backs up the rater in the event the rater is unable to accomplish it. The actual feedback form is a combination of essay and rating scale system of evaluation.

Officer Performance Reports (OPRs) are also accomplished in accordance with AFI 36–2406 (USAF, 2005) and are documented on the AF form 707 (AF707, see Appendix). This form recently changed from the AF707A/B to AF707. The essence of the form has remained the same since 1988; the AF707 reduced the length of the evaluation form and decreased the number of areas to be graded "meets standards" or "does not meet standards" from six to one. OPRs are accomplished annually, unless a change of job or position requires an additional OPR be accomplished. The 12–month cycle is individual to each officer; there is no mass reporting timeline.

Colonels and below are evaluated using the AF707, unless they are a student in training or attending a school that lasts longer than 20 weeks. In those

cases, a training report (TR) takes the place of the OPR and evaluates the officer's performance with respect to the course(s) accomplished.

The AF707 is an essay form of evaluation. The rater is required to provide information on the ratee, using all available sources. The rater is required to annotate certain information (such as convictions), recommended to annotate other information (such as adverse actions, like an Article 15), and cannot use the form for promotion or award recommendations, assignment, or professional military education (PME) recommendations inappropriate to rank. In addition, comments relating to developmental education, advanced degrees, or information regarding events that occurred outside the timeframe evaluated cannot be documented.

The OPR process has three (potentially two) evaluators administering the evaluation: the rater, additional rater, and senior rater (or reviewer). The rater is generally the immediate supervisor and must be an officer of equal or higher rank than the ratee. The additional rater is generally the rater's rater and must be of equal or higher rank than the rater and of higher rank than the ratee. The senior rater (or reviewer) is the senior rating position for the organization. AFI 36–2406 (USAF, 2005) states that the "reviewer is the primary quality control level and guards against inaccuracy and exaggeration" (p. 48).

Ratees should not write their own OPRs, but should provide information to the rater to enable him/her to accurately write the evaluation. The rater is responsible for writing the bulk of the evaluation. The rater generally provides a complete document (draft) for the additional rater. The additional rater makes changes, as desired. The senior rater does not put in any comments if he/she concurs with the evaluation, but may non-concur and place additional comments. The ratee is required to sign the OPR to complete the evaluation cycle. This is a recent change with the new AF707 form; the previous form did not require a ratee's signature and the rater was not supposed to show the OPR to the ratee until it became a part of official records.

Especially with an essay form of evaluation, there are robust informal processes in play. The first thing to note is that "records get promoted, not people." Based on this premise, evaluators understand that in addition to being an annual record of accomplishment, records must be competitive at the central selection board if they feel that officer should be promoted, and consequently, be allowed to continue in the military. If an outsider were to read some USAF officer evaluations, they might conclude that most all officers "cure cancer and walk on water" based on the words used. This is obviously not the case and the way officers are differentiated is through informal processes (anonymous, personal communication, October 23, 2009).

To indicate a top officer, stratification (ranking amongst a set or subset of individuals [Milkovich & Boudreau, 1994, p. 177]) and/or command recommendations are given. For average officers, the presence or absence of a PME recommendation indicates where in the average group one stands. As stratification is seen as a discriminator, officers are taught to find some way to be able to discriminate their subordinates. This is effectively "creative stratification." Obviously, "my #1 of 50 CGOs" is more impressive than "#1 of 10 LTs," but based on how OPRs are used in the promotion process, the implication of stratification can affect board members' perceptions.   The central board must process many records and make decisions in a limited amount of time. Just like any other time saving measure, certain items stand out and are "eye-catchers" for decision-making.   HQ AFPC/DPSIDE's OES training guide (2009) gives examples on stratification: "there are several recognized levels of stratification used by raters to convey the relative strength of an officer" (p.12). For example, the top is "my #1 of 12…finest officer I've ever known" and the lowest, "outstanding officer" (p. 12). This is an example of how officers are "educated" in inflation and an existing system of informal processes.

Certain words (such as "superstar" or "self-starter" or "mastermind") are used to subtly indicate ranking without numbers.   Unfortunately, word implications change over time based on overuse or the perception of the rater or

promotion board. Evaluations are written to ensure no "white space" in the comment blocks. "White space" implies the ratee did not accomplish enough or was not deserving enough to warrant a filled block. OPR comments are written in bullet format. Most bullets are "top-level" (main) bullets. Too many sub-bullets (secondary or expounding) imply the ratee did not have enough different accomplishments about which to write (anonymous, personal communication, October 23, 2009).

Especially with the preceding form and the amount of comments required, raters focused on the first and last lines of each block, knowing the promotion board has limited time to review records. If there are no hard-hitting bullets in those two lines, it implies something to the promotion board, even if there are superior comments in between.

Informally, ratees often provide raters with a complete draft OPR in addition to a list of accomplishments. This may be done to reduce the workload for the supervisor and give the ratee practice in writing OPRs. Through this process, junior officers can be mentored by their raters as to how an OPR should be written. This is often where training really happens, as opposed to formal training.

In addition to the words on a form, the person signing a form is a significant informal factor from a promotion board's perspective. A Maj Gen as a rater carries a lot more weight than a LtCol as a rater. This fact influences supervisors to strategically place individuals in jobs based on the resultant evaluation.

The final formal process in the OES is the promotion recommendation. This, too, is governed by AFI 36–2406 (USAF, 2005) and documented on the promotion recommendation form (PRF), AF form 709 (AF709). The PRF is a summary of career highlights as pulled from all OPRs, using 10 lines of text. While current events carry greater weight, performance over time is also important. This form is only used for promotion and is destroyed after the officer

meets the scheduled promotion board. The senior rater completes PRFs for every officer scheduled to meet a specific promotion board. The informal practices and politics are the same as with the OPR, such as "no wasted space" and stratification. Creative stratification is less used on PRFs as the senior rater is providing the promotion board his/her final ranking of all the officers meeting that promotion board in the organization. This is, in effect, a "mass reporting" for all officers of a specific rank meeting a promotion board.

The senior rater makes a final overall promotion recommendation: definitely promote (DP), promote (P), or do not promote this board (DNP). DPs are allocated to a senior rater based on total promotion opportunities and the number of officers a senior rater has for that promotion board. This process of DP allocations is a bureaucratic, standardized process. A senior rater with few officers up for promotion may not receive any DPs and may be required to attend a management level review (MLR) board to compete for DPs. MLRs are allocated DPs, receive "left-over" DPs from organizations due to "rounding errors," and acquire DPs not used by various organizations.

Once PRFs are completed, they are submitted, along with the officer's complete record, to the promotion board for consideration. The following section details the formal promotion process.

2.   Promotion Process

As was detailed in the description of the larger military organization, each service uses its own process to determine who will be promoted to the next rank. The AF divides up its force into competitive categories to dictate who competes against whom for promotion. The AF has "line of the AF" (LAF) and non-line officers. Non-line officers are judge advocates (JAG), chaplains (HC), medical corps (MC), dental corps (DC), nurse corps (NC), biomedical science corps (BSC), and medical service corps (MSC). Each of the non-line categories competes within itself. LAF officers are everyone else; logisticians, pilots, maintenance officers, etc., all compete against each other. While there is

specificity to each of those fields, these officers are seen as generalists and can compete for a variety of positions. They have mobility outside their narrow niche.

The purpose of the promotion program is to provide a stable, consistent, visible promotion pattern for all competitive categories, ensure the best officers are promoted, and allow for accelerated promotion for those with exceptional potential (USAF, 1997, p. 1; USAF, 2004, p. 12). Congress and the Secretaries determine the required force strengths and each service individually determines how many and how often to hold promotion boards in order to meet the respective requirements. An officer is considered for promotion once he/she enters the promotion zone. This zone is based on time-in-grade and the needs of the AF. Second Lieutenants are promoted at 2 years time-in-grade. First Lieutenants are also promoted at 2 years time-in-grade, without regard to vacancies. Once an officer reaches the rank of Captain and higher, he/she is only promoted after being selected by a promotion board and after a vacancy in the next higher rank occurs. It is an objective, standardized process.

The promotion board is comprised of individuals in the same demographic spread as the makeup of the officers up for promotion. These demographics include race, sex, aeronautical rating, career field, and command of assignment. The members of the board are "highly qualified senior officers with extensive experience and mature judgment" (USAF, 1997, p.10). The promotion board considers the following documents in order to make promotion decisions: OPRs, PRFs, TRs, letters of evaluation (similar to OPRs, but for a shorter time period or temporary duty), decorations, specialty board certification (non-line), officer selection brief (factual data on an officer's career up to that point), any letters to the board from the officer up for promotion, and any courts martial orders or adverse actions (article 15, letter of reprimand, etc.) taken on the officer.

Promotion is not a reward for past performance, but rather a recognition of the potential to serve in the next highest grade. The board is directed to look at the "whole person" in order to make the decision. The factors they consider are job performance, leadership (based on previous positions/jobs held), professional

qualities (expertise [depth] in the officer's specific field), breadth of experience (especially for higher ranks), job responsibility, academic and professional military education, and specific achievements (awards, decorations, special recognition, etc.).

The board members "score" each officer's record based on a scale of 6–10, with 6 being below average and 10 being outstanding. Board member training consists of conducting trial runs with a representative sample of packages until they can all achieve similar scores for each package. Based on the number of officers considered for promotion during a promotion board, the board members may be divided into panels to score a subset of the total records. The sub-group must be demographically representative, and the subset of records must be relatively equal in numbers, equal in promotion recommendation distribution, and be representative of the quality of the records meeting the board. If the board members are divided into panels, they will only score the records for that panel and will not see all the records meeting the promotion board.

The board members then score all packages for promotion through secret ballot. Each package receives a total score. The records are listed in order from highest to lowest and, based on the number of allocations for promotion, officers are selected for promotion, starting from the top. Where record scores are tied for consideration for promotion, they are sent back to the board members to re-score for further differentiation. The officers selected will either promote immediately upon release of board results (Lieutenants) or when vacancies arise (Captain and above).

Per discussion with the Air Force Board Secretariat (anonymous, personal communication, October 23, 2009), there is no average time spent reviewing records. While the magnitude may be daunting (for example, approximately 6,000 records to be reviewed and scored by 25 officers over the span of 3 weeks), they are directed to take as much, or as little, time as is necessary in order to accurately score the record. While there is no set amount of time, the

magnitude of the task guarantees that informal processes will be relied on to conquer the task. As was mentioned in the OPR and PRF sections, informal practices such as no white space, stratification, and hard-hitting bullets on the first and last line are all taken into account by the board members. If there is a lot of wasted space (white space), that gives an "impression" to a board member. Stratification, no stratification, and type of stratification implies something. Board members tend to read the "opening line" and "closing line" of OPRs and PRFs to get an overall impression. These informal practices mean one can inflate an OPR or PRF and yet still send a "message" to the promotion board about the officer.

C. USA

The Army, too, must evaluate its officers and make promotion decisions.

1. Evaluation Reporting System (ERS)

The purpose of the Army ERS is twofold: to provide information to the Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), to make personnel management decisions (such as school selection, promotions, and assignments) and to professionally develop their leaders and improve mission accomplishment (USA, 2007). These two objectives are supported by the Officer Evaluation Report (OER - DA FORM 67–9), the Officer Evaluation Support Form (DA FORM 67–9–1), and the Developmental Support Form (DA FORM 67–9–1a, for junior officers only).

The rating chain consists of the ratee, the rater, and the senior rater. Occasionally, there is an intermediate rater, but that is not the standard. The rater is normally the immediate supervisor and is normally senior in rank or date of rank of the ratee. The senior rater must be senior to the ratee and is generally the rater's rater.

The Army focuses greatly in their SOPs on the importance of formal feedback and counseling in their formal processes. The support and

developmental support forms are filled out in coordination with the rater and the ratee at the beginning of the evaluation period. Officers are required at least an initial counseling session with their rater, with follow on sessions mandatory for younger officers. In effect, the support form and the developmental forms are a form of "management by objective." The ratee is required to participate in setting goals, determining duties and responsibilities, and determining major performance objectives. The form is also used by the ratee to annotate what he/she accomplished over the rating period in order to help the rater fill out the evaluation form.

While the support form and development form do not become a part of permanent military records, the rating chain uses it to facilitate evaluation completion. The promotion board does not see these feedback and counseling forms.

The evaluation period for an Army officer is roughly annually. There are exceptions to the "rule" due to schools, amount of time supervised, and failure to select for promotion, but in general, an Army officer can expect one evaluation per year, on an individual time cycle (no mass reporting).

The OER (see Appendix) is a combination of subjective essay and standards accomplishment (checklist). The rater determines if the ratee has demonstrated successful accomplishment of Army values and leader attributes, skills, and action (standards). These are a "yes" or "no" selection. Any "no" requires the ratee to acknowledge the rating and allows the ratee an opportunity to supply evidence refuting the rating. The rater then fills out various sections in essay form, relying heavily on objectives developed and information included on the support form. The rater also makes a recommendation on the promotion potential of the officer ("must promote," "promote," "do not promote," or "other") directly on the evaluation form. There are no limits as to how many "must promotes," "promotes," or "do not promotes" a rater is allowed to give.

AR623–3 (USA, 2007) states that any negative ratings or comments must be referred back to the ratee for acknowledgement and opportunity for rebuttal. Comments in the essay sections must only cover the established rating period. Comments must also refrain from "excessive or exaggerated" phrases, trite comments without substantiation, bullet sentences, the use of type fonts to highlight information, and making any reference to the boxes selected in other areas of the form.

The senior rater also uses the support form in conjunction with writing the evaluation. The senior rater must evaluate the ratee's promotion potential ("best qualified," "fully qualified," "do not promote," or "other") on the evaluation form, comment on the ratee's performance and potential, and then must compare the ratee with other officers of the same grade. There are no limits as to the number of "best qualified," "fully qualified," or "do not promotes" a senior rater may give. Due to previous inflation issues (Hamilton, 2002), the Army instituted a restriction as to the number of "above center of mass" (ACOMs) evaluations in the potential section (part VII.b.) a senior rater could select.

A senior rater is limited to less than 50% ACOM rankings. This is managed by a "profile" that is kept on a senior rater at HQDA. This profile is permanent for a senior rater, unless a request for "reset" is approved, whereby a senior rater's profile is wiped out and reset to zero. A senior rater is required to manage his/her own profile to ensure an ACOM ranking is not submitted to HQDA when one is not available in his/her profile. If done, a "misfire" is generated; the senior rater is given the opportunity to correct the error; if the error is not corrected, a disciplinary letter is sent to the senior rater's senior rater (USA, 2007, p. 27). Once an evaluation is sent up to HQDA, section VII.b.'s selection is compared to the senior rater's profile and a computer generated value is overprinted on the evaluation. If an ACOM is selected but no ACOM is available, a center of mass (COM) value is overprinted, regardless of the selection of the senior rater. ACOM/COM rankings are only done on Majors or above (not LTs or CAPTs). Army evaluations are shown to the ratee after completion.

As with the USAF, there are elements of informal processes occurring during evaluation completion. Based on an interview with a senior Army officer (anonymous, personal communication, October 29, 2009), the following informal processes and elements of inflation are present. While the senior Army officer did say the form is considerably less inflated compared to the previous system, inflation is still present. Both the rater and the senior rater "must" give the "must promote" and "best qualified" ratings when evaluating. Not selecting these sends a very strong (negative) message to the promotion board, even though the options of "promote" and "fully qualified" do not sound very negative.

In addition, the write-ups in sections V.b. and VII.c. have a tendency to be "flowery and inflated" (anonymous, personal communication, October 29, 2009). Similar to the USAF, stratification and recommendations for command differentiate the best officers from the good officers, regardless of their actual promotion recommendation or potential (ACOM/COM) score. The issue of "white space" is not an informal process in the USA. Less (well written) is considered better, as opposed to using all available space for comments. As will be shown in the USA promotion process, the board has a daunting task of evaluating many officers for promotion, and so, comments by the rater are often not reviewed, instead, focusing on the comments of the senior rater.

Because of the limit on ACOM ratings, a senior rater must manage his/her own profile. This is especially daunting at the onset of a senior rater's evaluation history. In reality, in the first four officers a senior rater rates, only one is allowed to get an ACOM rating. This is non-negotiable. At HQDA, an ACOM rating can be overturned to a COM rating. In these cases, the senior rater relies on the informal processes of stratification and command recommendations to indicate to the board their inability to give the rating desired. Additionally, as previously discussed, some senior raters may choose to use those ACOM ratings to give officers coming up on a promotion board a "heartbeat," at the expense of an

officer they feel truly deserves the ACOM rating (Hamilton, 2002). This informal process is based on the senior rater's philosophy and is not standardized across the service.

2.   Promotion Process

The Army is also given leeway to promote its officers as it desires, and manages that system in accordance with AR 600–8–29 (USA, 2005). As with the AF, the Army uses a centralized promotion system. Officers are considered for promotion based on their active date of rank and time-in-grade (TIG). TIG requirements range from 18 months (2LT) to 3 years (CAPT, MAJ, and LTCOL). First Lieutenants must serve 2 years and Colonels must serve 1 year. Officers are promoted according to seniority (once they are selected for promotion).

Boards are convened as required to recommend officers for promotion to the next higher grade in accordance with U.S. codes. A separate board is convened for each competitive category and each separate rank. The Army has 10 competitive categories: Army, Chaplains, Judge Advocate General's Corps, Medical Service Corps, Army Medical Specialist Corps, Veterinary Corps, Army Nurse Corps, Medical Corps, Dental Corps, and Warrant Officer Corps. A majority of officers reside in the "Army" competitive category. A promotion board must be comprised of at least 5 officers, of which one must be of the same competitive category as that which is being reviewed. Board members must be at least a Major in rank, and must be of a higher rank than those considered.

The Secretary of the Army submits a memo of instruction to the board to communicate his/her guidance for the board. The memo details the oath to be taken by the board members, any reports required, the method of selection, any factors (such as the Army's need in certain functional, branch, or skill areas) to be considered, the maximum number of officers to be selected (of which 10% [or up to 15%] of the numbers may be taken from below the primary zone), and any other supplemental information.   The board receives the following items for each officer considered: performance records of the official military personnel file,

authorized documents that have not been filed, officer record brief, an official photograph, and any correspondence from the officer. Anything not part of official documentation on an officer is prohibited from the board.

The board promotes officers based on an impartial look at each officer's records. Boards select for promotion via two methods: fully qualified and best qualified. The fully qualified method is used when the number of officers up for promotion consideration is equal to the maximum number of officers authorized for promotion. This is often the case for the junior ranks of 2LT and 1LT. The best qualified method is used when there are more officers available for promotion consideration than the number allowed for promotion. In this case, the board must determine who will or will not be recommended for promotion.

For the junior ranks of Second and First Lieutenant, a promotion board may not even convene, based on the intent to promote via the fully qualified method. Officers' records are screened for any unfavorable attributes, such as courts martial or other negative issues. Boards for junior officers may be convened in cases where the Army is directed to reduce its forces strength, as was done in FY1994. LTs that were not selected for promotion were separated in accordance with applicable U.S. codes.

Board members receive a brief on the overall board processes and then conduct a mock promotion board to ensure members are consistent in their grading of officer records. Each board member views every record and assigns a score to it. On average, a board member spends about 30 seconds – 1 minute reviewing a record. Based on the amount of time available, board members predominately look for "left side" promotion recommendations ("must promote" and "best qualified"), first two and last two lines of the senior rater's comments, potential rating (ACOM/COM), the individual's picture, and the importance of the jobs held during the career (anonymous, personal communication, October 29, 2009).

The scores are aggregated and officers are listed in order based on those aggregate scores. Based on the number of officers allowed to be promoted and based on specific direction from the Secretary as to strengths in each functional area, officers are selected for promotion.

D.   USN

The purpose of the Navy evaluation system is to maintain records on naval personnel "which reflect their fitness for the service and performance of duties" (USN, 2008, p. I-1) and which are used for career actions such as promotion, training, specialization, and duty assignments. The Navy states "timely, realistic, and accurate reports are essential for each of these tasks" (USN, 2008, p. I-1).

1.   Evaluation System

The Navy evaluation system includes two main processes: feedback counseling and performance evaluation. Both are accomplished in accordance with BUPERSINST 1610.10B (USN, 2008) and are documented on the Navy's Fitness Report (FITREP) form (NAVPERS 1610/2) (see Appendix).

Feedback sessions (performance counseling) are used to "enhance professional growth, encourage personal development, and improve communication" (USN, 2008, p. 19-1). Counseling is scheduled at the midway point in an evaluation period and at the completion of an evaluation. This counseling (feedback) session is accomplished by the immediate supervisor or the reporting senior.

The rating chain for officers includes the ratee and the reporting senior. The reporting senior is normally the officer in charge or the commander of an organization. While the ratee's immediate supervisor is involved in constructing the FITREP, he/she does not have a separate section for comments and only signs stating a feedback session was accomplished. Navy regular FITREPs are done en masse, based on rank. With a few exceptions, officers receive a

FITREP at the same time each year, along with their peers. For example, all O–2s (LTJGs) receive their FITREPs in February; all O–3s (LTs) receive their FITREPs in January; and all O–6s (CAPTs) receive their FITREPs in July.

The FITREP form is a combination of essay and BARS evaluation. Seven character traits are marked based on demonstrated performance, with a performance trait grade of "3" being "performance to full Navy standards" (USN, 2008, p. 2). FITREP comments should be concise; should not use flowery language; should quantify performance, but not at the expense of quality; should differentiate officers from one another; and should be consistent with trait grades. Required, suggested, and prohibited comments are similar to the other services. Officers are given an opportunity to comment on reports that are considered "adverse."

Promotion recommendations are integral to the FITREP and do not depend on promotion eligibility. The senior rater may give a promotion recommendation of "Significant Problems" (a recommendation against promotion), "Progression" (a recommendation neither for nor against promotion), "Promotable," "Must Promote," and "Early Promote." As with the AF, the Navy limits the number of strong positive promotion recommendations ("Must Promote" and "Early Promote") through a bureaucratic, standardized process. The combination of "Must Promotes" and "Early Promotes" must not exceed 50% for O–4s or 40% for O–5/6s. Of those numbers, only 20% may be "Early Promotes." There are no limits for O–3s. O–1/2s (except for limited-duty officers) may only receive a promotion recommendation of "Promotable." With small groups, there will always be at least one "Must Promote" and one "Early Promote," regardless of percentages.

The USN has four competitive categories (unrestricted line [URL], restricted line, staff, and limited duty officer). Within the staff and restricted line categories, subcategories exist called designators. An officer's FITREP is written in comparison with other officers in the same competitive category and same designation, called "summary groups."

Each FITREP includes an average of the summary group's scores to show the officer's ranking among peers for that evaluation period under the specific reporting senior. This summary includes trait average and a summary of promotion recommendation allocations. An additional summary letter is created showing each officer's scores and the reporting senior's average (reporting senior's profile). All FITREPS within a specific summary group are mailed together to the Navy Personnel Command (NAVPERSCOM) for processing and inclusion into each officer's permanent records. Officers sign their FITREP and receive a copy of it when complete.

An interview with a senior Navy officer was conducted to highlight any inflation and any informal processes present in the Navy evaluation system (anonymous, personal communication, October 29, 2009). The senior officer stated that the system is not as inflated as it used to be due to the introduction of the reporting senior's profile. The reporting senior's profile allows a promotion board to easily view the relative score of an individual vs. the senior rater's average scores.

Because of the profile and the need of a senior rater to manage his/her profile, informal practices have emerged to supplement the formal processes. As with both the USAF and the USA, "soft breakouts" (stratification) are used to differentiate top officers from average officers, regardless of the actual scores. There is also the difference between stratification inside a competitive category vs. across competitive categories (#1 of 10 officers vs. #1 of 3 PAO officers), with one sending a stronger message to the board. "White space" is not considered an issue in Navy FITREPs.

Based on promotion board processes, reporting seniors will adjust evaluations to depict certain things to a board. New officers (to a reporting senior) are often given lower grades to help keep the reporting senior's profile under control and to allow the reporting senior to grade higher on the next

FITREP (to show progression). Certain traits are considered strategic levelers to adjust overall scores, such as command climate/equal opportunity and military bearing.

Regardless of the number of officers to be evaluated, a reporting senior always has at least one "must promote" and one "early promote." If that reporting senior does not use those allocations ("air gap"), it sends a strong (negative) message to the promotion board. For example, if a reporting senior rates one LCDR and only gives that officer a "must promote" instead of an "early promote," the board interprets it as a downgrade, not as a "must promote."

2. Promotion Process

The Navy convenes boards to recommend officers for promotion based on force strength allocations from Congress in the same manner as do the other services. Board composition and rules governing board operations are set forth in SECNAVINST 1401.3A (USN, 2005) and SECNAVINST 1420.1B (USN, 2006). Officers meet promotion boards based on TIG (as is the case for the other services). The Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) provides guidance to the board based on the needs of the service regarding competitive category numbers and skills needed in the next higher grade.

Selection boards are comprised of officers of that reflect the composition of the officer corps (sex, racial/ethnic minorities, etc.). Board members must be at least an O–4 and will be of a grade higher than the officers considered for promotion. SECNAVINST 1401.3A (USN, 2005) further dictates the minimum number of representatives per sub-specialty that must sit on the board. For example, in the unrestricted line officer promotion board, there must be five air warfare officers (at least one pilot and one naval flight officer), four surface warfare officers, three submarine officers, one special warfare officer, and one special operations officer. Requirements are different for the different competitive categories.

Board members receive both on-line training and training once they arrive for the board. Much of the training is on how to use their computer system based on the way they execute their promotion boards. Records are divvyed up to individual board members. Conversation with the promotion board office (anonymous, personal communication, October 28, 2009) revealed that board members could be responsible for anywhere from 50–300 records. The board member becomes the officer's advocate for promotion. The board member reviews, in depth, the records and annotates information to be briefed to the board as a whole. Periodically, the board members retire to the "tank" to vote on those records.

The officer's information is placed up on computer screens where all board members can see it. They will see the photo, the officer summary record (OSR), the performance summary record (PSR), and any markups by the advocate. The board members do not see the individual FITREPS; only the advocate actually reviews everything. The advocate proceeds to "sell" the individual and each board member votes a confidence level as to whether that individual would be suitable in the next rank. The confidence levels are 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100%. The scores are averaged and assigned to that record. This is done for every record.

Once all the records are complete, a scatter gram is shown to the board members and they vote on delineations to recommend for promotion and to exclude for promotion. For example, they may take the officers who scored 80% confidence averages and above and select them for promotion. They may exclude all officers who received a score of 30% and below. The rest in the middle are then re-divvyed to new advocates and the process repeats until the quota is filled.

In practice, an advocate has, on average, 15 minutes to review and markup a record. On average, the board makes their confidence decision in 45 seconds to 1 minute. The board focuses on relative scores, progression of

48

scores and promotion recommendations, and any relevant comments from the advocate. These focus points influence the way a senior rater writes evaluations.

E.   USMC

While the USMC is under the Department of the Navy and reports to the Secretary of the Navy, it does have a different evaluation system. The purpose of the USMC performance evaluation system (PES) is to provide the "primary means for evaluating a Marine's performance to support the Commandant's effort to select the best qualified personnel for promotion, augmentation, retention, resident schooling, command, and duty assignments" (USMCb, 2009, p. 2).

1.   Performance Evaluation System (PES)

The USMC evaluation system is governed by MCO P1610.7F (USMCb, 2009). The PES, itself, does not include counseling as an integral part, but does reference counseling as an important part of the process that culminates in the evaluation. Counseling can be accomplished via the "MRO Worksheet." This tool is used to clarify responsibilities, establish goals, and is used by the ratee to provide inputs to the formal evaluation. The evaluation is record of accomplishment and should not be used as a counseling tool (p. 1-6).

Marine Corps officers are trained in the PES process through access to the PES manual, instruction in formal schools, and unit training (USMCb, 2009, p. 8-5).

Different from the other services, the USMC does not place the ratee in the "reporting chain." The reporting chain is comprised of the reporting senior (RS), the reviewing officer (RO), a potential third officer sighter, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC). The ratee provides information to the reporting senior for inclusion on the evaluation, but is not as involved in the process as the other services. The reporting senior is generally the next highest officer in the reporting chain for the ratee.

Throughout the regulation, the officers in the reporting chain are cautioned against inflating reports. The RS is reminded that "inflated markings, patronizing comments, and other techniques designed to "game the system" and give the MRO [Marine reported on, added] an undeserved advantage over contemporaries are acts of misplaced loyalty and ultimately hurt the institution" (USMCb, 2009, p. 2-4). The RO is generally the RS's rater. He/she is also reminded to avoid inflation and is directed to "not concur with inflated reports" (p. 2-5). The third officer sighting is only used in the event a report is considered "adverse."

Fitness reports are due annually at the same time each year (with Captain through Colonel due in May), unless another reason (such as change of reporting official, temporary duty, change of rank, or as directed due to unfavorable situations) dictates, similar to the USN.

The evaluation tool is the form NAVMC 10835E (see Appendix) and is a combination of essay and BARS. MCO 1610.7F Ch1 (USMCb, 2009) calls the rating scales PARS (performance anchored rating scales), but it is the same as BARS. The evaluation form is the longest of all the services at five pages, not including any addendums. The regulation is extremely detailed in how the form is to be completed, again, warning against inflation at every section. The PARS section includes evaluation of 13 attributes, using a scale of "A" through "G." "A" is considered unacceptable performance and requires written justification. "F" and "G" are considered exceptional performance and also require written justification. "B" – "E" marks do not required written justification (and, in fact, justification is forbidden).

RSs develop a grading history over time (RS profile) that allows for a relative value of an officer's performance. This is similar to the Navy and Army system. This profile is a dynamic tool that cannot be reset. The RO also develops a comparative assessment profile. A master brief sheet fitness report listing will evaluate a ratee's received marks in relation to the RS and RO profiles. This evaluation includes the ratee's marks vs. the profile at processing

(a static number/value) and the ratee's marks vs. the RS/RO profiles at master brief sheet processing. This last value is a dynamic value that continues to change as the RS/RO accomplishes more and more evaluations. This influences consistent and accurate evaluations as evaluations today affect the relative value of evaluations previously accomplished and those yet to be written (USMCb, 2009, pp. G-1 – G-3 and K-1 – K-3).

MCO P1610.7F (USMC, 2009, pp. N-1 – N-3) also describes methods to identify, notify, and rectify actors in the PES that either display noteworthy adherence to the intent of the system or those that display undesirable reporting trends such as inflation, gaming, or procedural errors. RS/ROs displaying undesirable trends are notified directly. If those trends continue, their supervisors are notified. This information could then become a part of the RS/RO's evaluation. Evaluations considered unduly inflated at the headquarters level have actually been returned to the RS/RO for re-accomplishment.

Promotion recommendations are inherent in the evaluation form. The RS makes the promotion recommendation (yes, no, or N/A) and can also make a recommendation for accelerated promotion. The RO is only required to comment on an accelerated promotion recommendation. There are no limits as to the number of promotion recommendations that can be given.

The ratee is only required to sign an "adverse" evaluation. Otherwise, the ratee receives a copy of the completed evaluation either after completion or from the personnel center after the evaluation has been incorporated into permanent records.

An interview was conducted with a senior Marine Corps officer (anonymous, personal communication, October 30, 2009) to unearth any inflationary issues and informal processes evident in the USMC evaluation system. The current evaluation form was introduced in 1998 due to extreme inflation in the previous system. The senior officer commented that the current system overcompensated in its efforts to eliminate inflation. The system was

designed with the "competent" officer receiving the second to lowest score. This does not leave any "wiggle room" for profile management. Based on this, many RS/ROs have developed practices that move the average ranking into the middle, regardless of the PARS descriptor, to allow for profile management and the ability to manipulate relative scores. RS/ROs profile scores are used as part of their own evaluations and influence them to keep the scores under control (un-inflated). This is present in section H, under evaluations, with the PARS descriptor directly referencing evaluation inflation.

RSs that followed the regulation to the letter would have consistently graded competent officers in the lower half of the available scale. If they changed their method to adhere to the practice of "middle of the scale," then they would penalize previous ratees with the dynamic relative score. Based on this, informal training (mentorship) may teach a middle of the scoring scale system for profile management.

Another informal aspect of the Marine evaluation system is the culture of humility and limited early promotion opportunity. This culture seems to contribute to a lower rate of inflation.

As with the other services, scores, alone, are not indicative of the whole person. The RS/ROs use the directed comments sections to talk up or talk down an officer. There were no stigmas associated with "white space." While inflated language may be used, it was not to the same level as other services.

2.   Promotion Process

The USMC promotion process is similar to the other services. They have two major active duty officer competitive categories: unrestricted and restricted. Unrestricted officers are the bulk of the officers in the Marine Corps and compete against each other for promotion.

The rules governing the promotion process, board member requirements, authorized information provided to the board, and eligibility for consideration for

promotion are the same as the other services, are directly governed by the same regulations as the USN, and are further refined by MCO P1400.31C Ch1 (USMCa, 2009).

The actual promotion board process is as follows. Each officer considered for promotion has his/her "case" assigned to a board member. Each board member reviews and prepares his/her "in-the-zone" cases to be presented to the board. They then review and prepare their above- and below-the-zone cases. This allows the board member to gauge the "competitiveness" of above- and below-the-zone officers to that board. The above- and below-the-zone cases are then briefed to the entire board for a vote. If selected, which only requires one "yes" vote, they are considered a "premier" case and are included in the overall voting session for consideration for promotion. The Marine Corps has a very distinct culture of not promoting early (from below-the-zone). Since FY04, only one officer has been promoted below-the-zone on the Major and LtCol promotion boards (USMC, n.d.).

Once all cases are ready, they are briefed to the entire promotion board. Each board member assigns a recommendation score (for his or her own benefit) to each record, and, once complete, will vote "yes" or "no" for each record. The board president then sets cutoff values (similar to the Navy) as to who is selected and who is not selected. For example, with 10 board members, any officer that receives 10 "yes" votes will be selected for promotion, and any officer that receives zero "yes" votes will not be selected for promotion. That process is repeated until the allocation is filled or until a majority of the board considers no one else deserving of promotion.

On average, a board members takes 45–90 minutes to review each individual record and has approximately 8–10 minutes to brief those records to the other board members. On average, it only takes about 6 minutes for the board members to make a decision (anonymous, personal communication, November 3, 2009).

The board takes into consideration any skill sets dictated by the SECNAV or CMC as shortages, but is still directed to promote officers "best and fully qualified" (USMCa, 2009, p. 3–9) for promotion to the next highest grade.

F.   SUMMARY OF EVALUATION AND PROMOTION SYSTEMS

Now that each service has been researched and described, so what? What do the tools for evaluation, the formal and informal processes, and the promotion systems have to do with inflation?

Service-specific systems and relevant aspects are summarized in Table 3.

	Air Force	Army	Navy	Marine Corps
System of Raters	• 2–3 levels	• 2 levels	• Senior level	• 2 levels
Do Ratees See/Sign Evaluation Form?	• Yes; required for form completion	• Only required to sign an adverse report; given a copy after completion	• Yes, must sign when complete	• Only required to sign an adverse report; given a copy after completion
Competitive Categories	• 1 Large	• 1 Large	• Multiple, but 1 Large	• 1 Large
Type of Evaluation Form	• Essay	• Essay • Checklist • Forced Distribution	• BARS • Essay	• BARS • Essay
Formal Controls	• None	• Reporting Senior profile	• Senior Rater profile	• Reviewing Senior and Reviewing Officer profile
Evaluation Timeline (in general)	• Every 12 months	• Every 12 months	• Mass reporting yearly	• Mass reporting yearly
Promotion Recommendation	• Separate form, separate process	• Integral to evaluation form	• Integral to evaluation form	• Integral to evaluation form
Promotion Recommendation Restrictions	• Yes	• No	• Yes	• No
Promotion Process				
Training of Board Members	• Yes • Practice record scoring	• Yes • Mock board	• Yes • PPT and training on computer systems used	• Yes • Training on computer systems used
Scoring of Records	• Value of 6–10, rank ordered by score, selected based on available promotion slots • Not every board member sees every record	• Score record and promote by aggregate score/direction of Sec of Army • Every board member sees every record	• Advocate method • Board members see summary of record • Vote with confidence level • Groups are promoted based on scoring divisions	• Advocate method • Board members may see entire record • Vote yes/no • Groups are selected based on logical divisions based on number of yes/no votes
Informal Processes	• Stratification • PME recommendations • Command recommendations • Word usage • "White space"	• "Left side" promotion recommendations • Stratification • Strategic manipulation of ACOM/COM	• Stratification • "Air Gap" promotion recommendation • Profile manipulation	• Profile Manipulation

Table 3.   Service Specific Formal and Informal Processes Comparison

Beginning with structure, each service has roughly two to three levels of supervision actually completing the evaluation. The first level is generally the immediate supervisor; the second level is generally a senior officer responsible

for all the officers in that organization. Each ratee is at least shown their evaluation, and in some cases the evaluation is not complete until the ratee signs it. The cultural imperative of "looking out for your people," the culture of loyalty and camaraderie, and the potential for a rater to succumb to common reasons for inflation (motivation, avoidance of confrontation, reward for performance, etc. [Longenecker & Ludwig, 1990]) are all present based on who rates and the interaction between the rater and ratee.

In general, most officers are members of one large, competitive category. This means that they must compete for promotion against a wide variety of other officers in dissimilar occupations. Evaluation theory states that each service's use of essay forms of evaluation make it difficult to compare across different groups. The informal processes of stratification (ranking) is also not useful for comparing across groups.

The Army's use of the checklist method prohibits identifying variation or levels of differentiation; however, it is an excellent way of determining the presence or absence of key traits or characteristics (Milkovich & Boudreau, 1994). In this way, it is setting a standard for minimum accomplishment, which may be compatible with the military culture. The Army's use of forced distribution does force the rater to identify top performers (there is no restriction on other categories), but does not account for abnormal or skewed distributions. There may be situations where a rater does happen to supervise a group of top level officers. This restriction has led to situational manipulation of rankings (Hamilton, 2002). This use of forced distribution was instituted based on previous levels of inflation.

Both the Navy and the Marine Corps' use of BARS are based on a set of standards. This potentially allows the forms to identify differentiation or variation amongst officers. While BARS can be subject to various forms of inflation or biases, the Navy and Marine Corps have both instituted rater profiles to allow for differentiation in a relative manner and to influence the rater to comply with the evaluation system's intent. The BARS system is still subject to manipulation

(anonymous, personal communications, October 29 & 30, 2009), but it at least theoretically allows for variation and can handle occasional instances of skewed distributions (a group of superior performing officers) if the rater has managed his/her profile in the past. The forms are still subject to informal processes to counteract some of the restrictions placed on by the implementation of the profile system.

Both the Navy and the Marine Corps use mass reporting timelines. This tends to reduce inflation in the informal process of stratification, as all officers are compared at a single time. The Air Force and the Army evaluate officers every 12 months on individual ratee timelines. This allows for more creative stratification as a rater can argue that the "#1" has changed over a short period.

Promotion recommendations are integral to the forms in the Army, Navy, and the Marine Corps. In the Army, this promotion recommendation is considered useless unless it is something other than "must promote" and "best qualified" (anonymous, personal communication, October 29, 2009). In other words, "promote" and "fully qualified" (the next two options for promotion recommendation) are considered unfavorable. The Navy is restricted in its promotion recommendations through forced distribution calculations. With a larger number of officers being rated on, this method is a bit more useful. The problem arises when a senior rater has only a small number of officers. Not using the allocation of "must" and "early promotes" before the "promotable" option signifies a considerable downgrade. In other words, promotion recommendations may either be actual recommendations or they may be selected only so as not to send a negative message to the board. The Marine Corps has the most neutral promotion recommendation, as a "yes" or "no" option, with the possibility of an "accelerated promotion" recommendation. This supports the culture of "on time" promotions. The Air Force uses a separate promotion recommendation form, subject to restrictions, to recommend officers for promotion only when they are meeting a promotion board. This is a form of forced distribution that, again, is difficult to use with small groups, does not

account for skewed distributions, and can conflict with the culture of the organization. It does, however, reduce the use of creative stratification as the senior rater is ranking all officers at the same time.

Overall, promotion boards are similar in that a representative group of senior officers are tasked with reviewing and comparing the records of all the officers eligible for consideration for promotion. The methods used are slightly different and have some subtle nuances. The Marine Corps has a separate vote to determine if below or above the zone officers are even competitive with the in-the-zone officers. If not, they are not even voted on for promotion selection. This is in line with the culture of "on-time" promotions of the Marine Corps. Both the Navy and the Marine Corps assign an advocate to each record up for promotion. They are then responsible for briefing the highlights and trends of that record to the rest of the board. In the Army and the Air Force, board members either look at all the records (USA) and score them or look at a subset of records (AF) and score them. Regardless of which service, informal processes are used to make decisions on promotion recommendations. These processes by which boards make decisions filter down to the rest of the service to influence the way raters accomplish evaluations.

The evaluation system is made up of many subsystems that interact and influence one another. The implications of those interactions and influences are the subject of the next chapter.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The basic hypothesis of this research was that the organizational structure of the military; officer-specific reward and promotion systems; tasks, tools, and processes of evaluation; organizational culture; and the interaction between individuals influence personnel to inflate evaluations over time. Each of these independent variables have been discussed either with respect to theory or in isolation to demonstrate what occurs. The question now is how do each of these variables contribute towards inflationary tendencies?

A. STRUCTURE

The military organization, with respect to the evaluation system, is a professional machine that uses SOPs to direct the system and has professional individuals who operate within that system. Reward and promotion systems are centralized and standardized within the military organization. The evaluation tasks are decentralized to the individual professionals (officers), but the evaluations feed into the centralized system. The military system is "up or out;" officers must promote in order to stay in the military without the uncertainty associated with continuation boards.

The rater's position within that system—executing decentralized activities (the evaluation) but without the ability to directly influence the decisions at the central level—establishes a degree of powerlessness. While the rater may feel that the ratee is deserving of promotion or continuation in the military, it is ultimately not the rater's decision. In addition, force strength dictates from the USG may mean that officers are separated, even with competitive records. The supervisor has the ability to distribute some elements of intrinsic rewards (such as position or responsibility), but does not have the power to change the basic extrinsic rewards that a member receives. Inflation is the best option to influence centralized decisions.

B.   REWARD AND PROMOTION SYSTEM

The extrinsic military reward and promotion systems are centralized and standardized. Rewards can be categorized as "task non-contingent rewards," (Cameron & Pierce, 2002, p. 43) as they are given regardless of involvement in a specific activity or a specific level of accomplishment of an activity and are based solely on one's position within the military with regards to rank and time-in-grade. There are some other elements of extrinsic reward that are specific to location or specialty (special pay), but they still apply to a broad group of people and they are not contingent on evaluation scores.

The only way to increase basic extrinsic rewards (such as basic pay, basic allowances, and retirement pay, not including special pay) is to promote. Promotion is the concrete link between the evaluation system and rewards. More importantly, *not* promoting is a punishment in a system where lack of promotion at a pre-determined time can be basis for forced separation. Promotion decisions are centralized. If a rater believes that a ratee is compatible with military service and deserves the opportunity to remain in, the only way to influence this is through the tool of evaluation, the formal and informal processes resident in the evaluation task, and their interaction at the promotion board.

C.   EVALUATION TOOLS, TASKS, AND PROCESSES

The AF evaluation form is an essay method of evaluation. This method is considered poor when attempting to compare across employees (Milkovich & Boudreau, 1994, p. 186). It lacks structure and standardization in a standardized and centralized system. While there are informal processes in play to delineate top officers (such as stratification), how do those informal processes compare across various specialties? Some would argue that there are positions or specialties where even the bottom individual in one organization is better than the number one individual in another organization when considering obligations and responsibilities necessary for the next higher rank. The tool is completely reliant on the rater understanding the informal systems at play (stratification,

word usage, school and command recommendations) and on the rater's writing ability. In addition, the rater must understand how to portray the officer in such a way that the promotion board can accurately compare officers across a broad spectrum of traits and capabilities.

An average AF O–5 promotion board involves approximately 25 people reviewing about 6,000 records in 3 weeks. On a recent O–5 promotion board, 5,923 officers were considered (including in-, above-, and below-the-zone). Of the 1,412 officers considered in-the-zone, 1,045 were selected, for a promotion rate of 74%. Above-the-zone officers were promoted at a 2.4% rate and below-the-zone officers were promoted at a 4% rate. Twenty percent of the total officers considered were promoted (Air Force Personnel Center, n.d.).

Depending on what zone an officer is in, his/her record needs to be better than those not selected. To ensure that, a record needs to sound as strong as it can against almost 6,000 other officers. The rater does not personally know all these other officers and cannot ensure the other raters are not inflating. In the LAF competitive category, there exists multiple specialties; a rater must ensure that an evaluation for an officer in the maintenance specialty can "compare" to an evaluation for an officer in the intelligence specialty. These factors and the desire to get an individual promoted under the current system influences a rater to inflate an evaluation.

D. CULTURE

The professionals within the system are part of a culture. At the broadest level, the services instill an overall culture of excellence, high standards, integrity, and loyalty. At the sub-organizational (or unit level), an additional culture resides. This culture advances the notion that individuals within that unit (or occupation) are better than other units (or occupations). While an individual may be average within a specific unit, the culture of that unit is that they are surely better than anyone else. Therefore, the average officer is perceived as above average when compared to unknowns outside the unit.

61

In order for an officer to stay in the military, he/she must promote. Evaluations are decentralized, but promotion decisions are not. Raters have a lack of control with respect to promotions, and the only way to influence promotion is through evaluations. In order to promote in a centralized system, that officer must have a competitive evaluation. The rater writing that evaluation knows the system, is influenced by the culture, and makes a rational decision based on those interactions. As is frequently stated, "records get promoted, not people."

While Robbert et al. (1997) postulate that military members are not as motivated by extrinsic rewards, the only way to change the value of the basic reward is to promote. Conversely, the lack of promotion is a penalty as that could lead to forced separation from the military in an "up or out" system. Currently, continuation boards are recommending most officers for continuation; that is not always going to be the case. The current officer extrinsic reward system is the same for everyone else in the military. The only way to promote is to have a competitive record.

Military officers are assumed to be rational beings. They will make the best choice with respect to their objective. The general objective is to take care of one's people. That is realized through many ways, including strong evaluations that will ultimately lead to promotion. As evaluations are done locally, but promotion decisions are executed centrally, the rater will do his/her best to ensure that an evaluation is competitive. This leads a rater to inflate an evaluation, while using an informal system to distinguish the true top officers. This feeds into the culture of the military—average is perceived as inadequate. To avoid that perception, the rater inflates. An average (which may still be well above the average for the population) becomes an outstanding.

E.   PEOPLE AND GAME THEORY

The previous subsystems are somewhat static with regard to the pressures towards inflation. The previous subsystems *exist*. Their existence, by

themselves, does not cause inflation. The only way inflation happens is through the decision of an individual to fill out an evaluation form in a specific way. Inflation is a cognitive process by an individual based on influences from the other subsystems. Individuals within the military are assumed to be rational beings that act in a rational manner in order to maximize their choices. Based on this assumption, the individuals within the military accomplishing a performance evaluation can be modeled through game theory.

Based on the culture of the military, and even more so, the culture of individual units or sub-organizations, supervisors generally try to "take care of their people." Competition often exists between units or job specialties, and it is easy to project the idea that most members of an organization are above average. This culture of "above average" or "excellence" is resident in the overall military culture and in the individual unit identity or sub-organization identity.   An individual will naturally feel loyalty and pride in one's own unit or one's own profession. This pride and loyalty may lead to the attitude that individuals within a unit or profession are superior to those in another unit or profession. It would be a natural inclination for a supervisor to want his/her subordinate (a known entity) to be promoted (and therefore, retained) versus an individual in another unit (a potential unknown), halfway across the world (and a competition to his/her subordinate). This perception is relevant to inflation tendencies when promotion decisions are centralized and not controlled by individual units.   The games modeled below are based on the decision to write an evaluation on the "average" person, not those who stand out as well below average. The assumption is that the tendency to inflate evaluations is not as prevalent when dealing with obvious underperformers.

In accordance with game theory (Freeman, 1996), individual choices that are not diametrically opposed can be modeled within the context of partial-conflict games. In the case of a large organization that makes promotion decisions at a central location, it is most useful to look at non-cooperative games in order to model rational decisions (Freeman, 1996, p. 579). Non-cooperative

games are most relevant when no binding agreement can be made or enforced. Communication can occur, but there is no guarantee that a person will choose as promised. A key element of non-cooperative games is that, in the end, self-interests may actually lead to a lower payoff for both players than that which can be accomplished by cooperation, and by extension, to sub-optimization for an overall system.

In this evaluation non-cooperative game, two dominant attitudes of the military individual (rater) are assumed. First, a rater's loyalty to the organization and its formal systems outweigh the loyalty to the ratee. A rater believes in the systems established for evaluation, promotion, assignments, and other human resource decisions. For the purposes of evaluations, a rater would choose to write an accurate evaluation if others were also writing accurate evaluations; conversely, a rater would write an inflated evaluation if others were writing inflated evaluations. Even while inflation is considered dysfunctional under this attitude, at least everyone is on the same level if everyone writes either accurate or inflated evaluations.

The second attitude is that a rater's loyalty to the ratee outweighs the loyalty to the organization and its systems. For the purposes of evaluation, a rater would choose to write an accurate or inflated evaluation based on whether it was more advantageous to the advancement of the ratee.

Longenecker and Ludwig (1990) list multiple reasons why a rater would choose to be lenient and inflate ratings: foster employee motivation, maximize potential rewards, avoid damage to an employee's career, reward performance, reward effort, and due to a personal liking of the individual. In addition, there are deviant reasons for a rater to inflate an evaluation: avoiding airing "dirty laundry," avoiding conflict/confrontation with employee, and promoting an employee out of their organization.

Probably the most widely known partial conflict games are the *Game of Chicken* (where there is no dominant strategy) or the *Prisoner's Dilemma* (where

there is a dominant strategy). The *Game of Chicken* most closely resembles the first attitude, with no dominant strategy. The *Prisoner's Dilemma* most closely resembles the second attitude, with a dominant strategy.

1.   Game of Chicken

Figure 3 depicts the values assigned for the Game of Chicken. A "4" represents the player's best choice. A "1" represents the player's worst choice. The first value in the parentheses is Driver 1's values; the second value is Driver 2's values. Each player strives to maximize his/her value. If Driver 1 knew that Driver 2 was going to swerve, Driver 1 can maximize his values by choosing "Not Swerve" (for a value of 4,2). If Driver 1 knew Driver 2 was not going to swerve, Driver 1 would maximize his values by choosing "Swerve" (for a value of 2,4). The same is true in reverse. However, each driver's best choice is dependent on what the other driver does. If each driver attempts to gain his/her highest value of "4" by not swerving, it results in the worst possible state for both – impact (1,1). Both (4,2) and (2,4) are Nash equilibria – neither player can unilaterally improve his/her score. While the second best option is for both players to swerve (for a value of [3,3]), it is an unstable situation. Both players may promise to swerve, but it is in each person's self-serving interest to not swerve and potentially gain the highest payoff of "4."   In this game, the choices are interdependent and based on what the other player chooses to do.

TABLE 15.11	Payoffs in a Driver Confrontation, as Modeled by Chicken		
		Driver 2	
		Swerve	Not Swerve
Driver 1	Swerve	(3, 3)	(2, 4)
	Not swerve	(4, 2)	(1, 1)

Figure 3.   The Game of Chicken (From Freeman, 1996, p. 584)

This game is similar to the first attitude of loyalty to the system over loyalty to the ratee. For system loyalty, ordinal rankings of preference are listed in Table 4:

	Evaluation quality	Reason
4 (Best)	DNI*/DNI	• Integrity/honesty • Allows system to work as planned • No unwritten "rules"
3	I**/I	• People are matched in inflated system • Can use "unwritten rules" to show true ranking • Reduced conflict w/potentially unhappy ratees • Motivation • Maximize rewards • Reward behavior
2	I/DNI	• Allows subordinate an advantage • Reduced conflict w/potentially unhappy ratees • Motivation • Maximize rewards • Reward behavior
1 (Worst)	DNI/I	• Subordinate is disadvantaged

* DNI = Do Not Inflate
** I = Inflate

Table 4.   Rater Preferences for Evaluation Quality (Loyalty to System)

A variation of this game has choices 2 and 3 swapped. This does not change the results of the game. The games are shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5:

I   DNI

I   3/3   2/1

Rater A

DNI   1/2   4/4
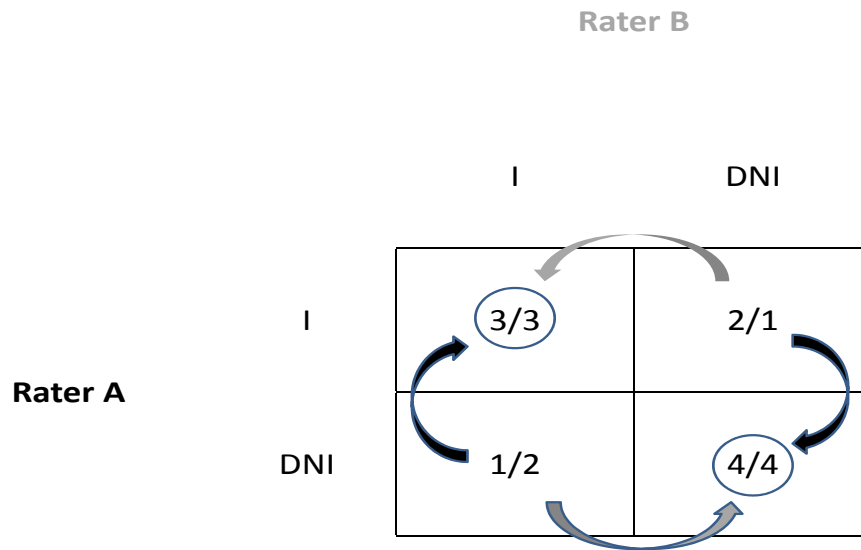
Figure 4.   Loyalty to System Game (1st Iteration)

I   DNI

I   2/2   3/1

Rater A

DNI   1/3   4/4
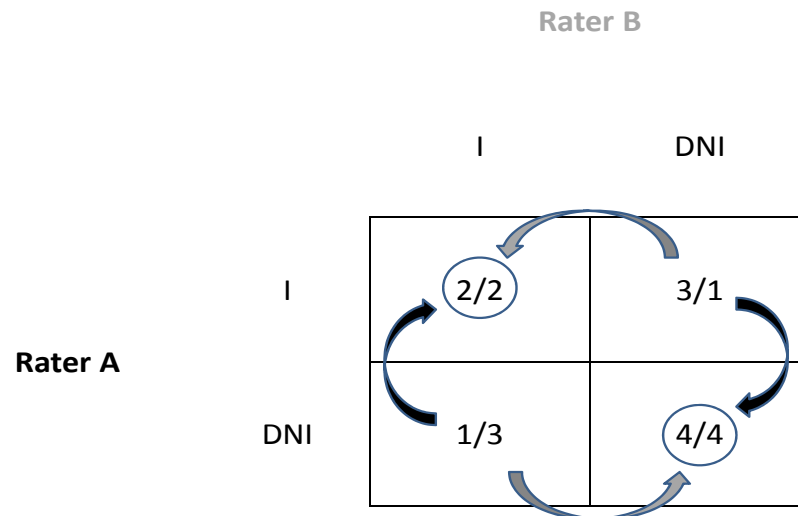
Figure 5.   Loyalty to System Game (2nd Iteration)

These game models tell us that the state of everyone writing accurate evaluations (DNI, DNI) and everyone writing inflated evaluations (I,I) are Nash equilibria. In both these states, it is not beneficial for an individual to make a choice other than what has been made, if their loyalty is to the system. If the

equilibrium is DNI/DNI (for a value of 4/4), and one chose to inflate an evaluation, that choice would be less optimal for the inflator, and the worst choice for the one choosing to not inflate (for a value of 3/1 or 1/3; or 2/1 or 1/2). Once one supervisor inflates, the others will also eventually inflate to get their next best option of I/I (for a value of 3/3). This situation quickly moves towards the Nash equilibrium of all players inflating evaluations.

It is easy to see that even if a majority of the raters had a greater loyalty to the organization and the system, it only takes a few people to make a decision to inflate an evaluation before everyone does, regardless of the rater's attitude. This situation occurs when either a system-loyal individual makes an "irrational" choice or when the system includes individuals of a different attitude, one where the loyalty is to the ratee (comrade) rather than the system. This is the second viewpoint, and probably more realistic based on military culture.

2.   Prisoner's Dilemma

Figure 6 and Figure 7 depict the values assigned for Prisoner's Dilemma. The value of "4" is the best choice and "1" is the worst choice. Each player strives to maximize his/her value. If the blue player chooses to arm ("A"), the red player can maximize his value by also choosing to arm (value of 2,2). If the blue player chooses to disarm ("D"), the red player can maximize again by choosing to arm (value of 4,1). The same is true in reverse. In both cases, without communication or without the ability to ensure compliance with a promised decision, it is in each player's dominant strategy to choose to arm ("A"), or rather, to get his maximum value regardless of what the other player chooses. This is a Nash equilibrium; a state where no player can unilaterally choose another path and increase his/her value.

TABLE 15.9	The Outcomes in an Arms Race, as Modeled by Prisoners' Dilemma		
		Blue	
		A	D
Red	A	Arms race	Favors red
	D	Favors blue	Disarmament

Figure 6.   Prisoner's Dilemma (Arms Race – From Freeman, 1996, p. 581)

TABLE 15.10	Ordinal Payoffs in an Arms Race, as Modeled by Prisoners' Dilemma		
		Blue	
		A	D
Red	A	(2, 2)	(4, 1)
	D	(1, 4)	(3, 3)

Figure 7.   Prisoner's Dilemma (Arms Race – From Freeman, 1996, p. 581)

Both players end up with their second worst option if they play selfishly; if they cooperate, they could realize their second best choice of mutual disarmament.

Table 5 depicts the ordinal rankings of preference for the second attitude.

	Evaluation quality	Reason
4 (Best)	I*/DNI**	• Allows subordinate an advantage • Reduced conflict w/potentially unhappy ratees • Motivation • Maximize rewards • Reward behavior
3	I/I	• People are matched in inflated system • Can use "unwritten rules" to show true ranking • Reduced conflict w/potentially unhappy ratees • Motivation • Maximize rewards • Reward behavior
2	DNI/DNI	• Integrity/honesty • Allows system to work as planned • No unwritten "rules"
1 (Worst)	DNI/I	• Subordinate is disadvantaged

* I = Inflate
** DNI = Do Not Inflate

Table 5.   Rater Preferences for Evaluation Quality (Loyalty to Ratee)

A variation of this game has choices 2 and 3 swapped.   This does not change the results of the game. The games are shown in Figure 8 and Figure 9:
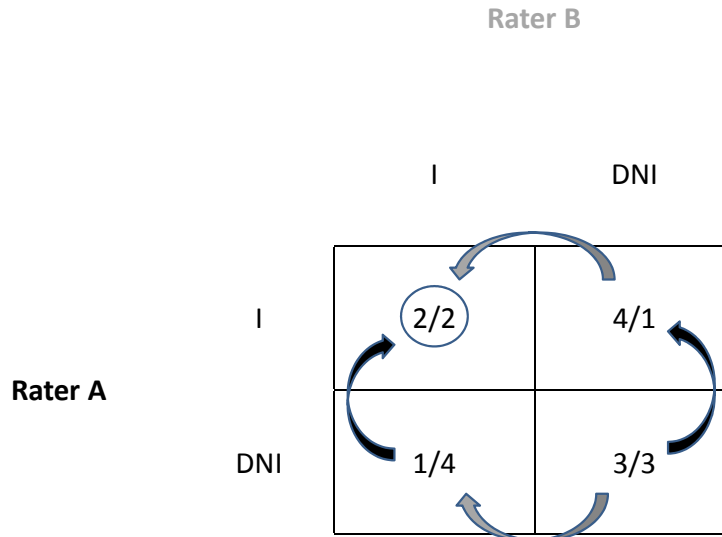
Figure 8.   Loyalty to Ratee Game (1st Iteration)

I   DNI

I   3/3   4/1

Rater A

DNI   1/4   2/2
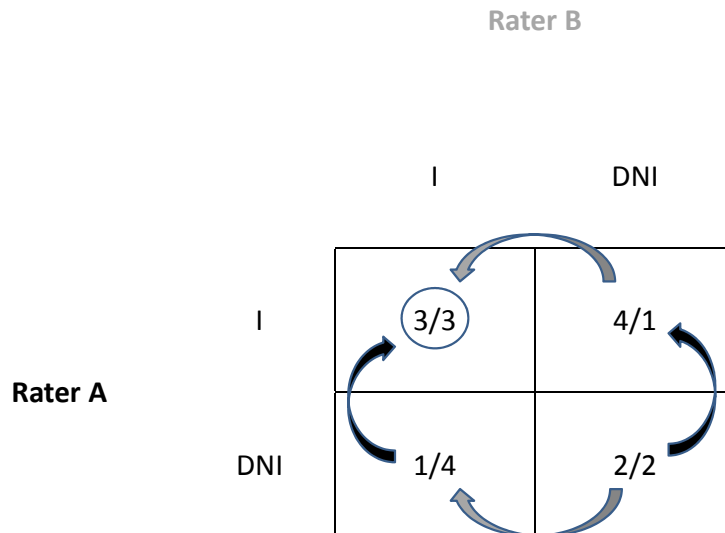
Figure 9.   Loyalty to Ratee Game (2nd Iteration)

In both these game models, it is obvious that each rater has a dominant strategy of choosing to inflate evaluations. The state of everyone choosing to inflate evaluations is a Nash equilibrium, no one person can unilaterally improve his/her state. In the case of Figure 9, where each rater believes that I/I is the second best choice (for a value of 3/3), cooperation in not inflating would not improve their status (it would reduce to a value of 2/2).

Based on previous reports of perceptions of evaluation systems, a military culture that stresses loyalty to comrades, and the way evaluations feed into the reward system through the promotion system, this scenario is the most likely. For instances outside the obvious underperformer, it is the rater's dominant strategy to inflate evaluations.

Each subsystem of the evaluation system has its own driving force towards inflation.

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V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONGRUENCE AND FIT

Nadler and Tushman (1997, p. 35) state that an organization's performance depends on the congruence, or fit, of the elements within the organization. If the elements within the organization are a tight fit, the resultant performance will be higher. The current USAF evaluation system is inflated. The USAF system, as with the other service systems, has attempted to curtail inflation many times throughout its history. Yet, the system always seems to revert to an inflated state. Subsystems and their interaction with each other must be such that they promote inflation. The current configuration of subsystems within the evaluation system must be congruent with inflation.

Changing one or two elements within the system will not necessarily cause the other elements to conform and produce the desired performance (Mercer-Delta, 1998). The USAF has attempted to change the evaluation tool multiple times over its history. That one element is not enough to change the desired output.

If the design purpose of the evaluation system is that of a reliable record of performance that can be used to identify the best qualified officers for various human resource decisions (promotion, assignment, etc.), then the subsystems must support that goal. Based on the concept that an accurate assessment of an individual is more useful than an inflated assessment, an evaluation system congruent with accuracy would produce accurate evaluations.

B. CONCLUSIONS

In order to combat inflation, one cannot just address the tool used for evaluation. As shown in Figure 1, the evaluation system is comprised of structure, culture, tasks/tools, people, and reward systems. It is influenced by

system inputs (environment, resources, and history) and by the interaction of the subsystems within. If the desired performance is not achieved, it may be due to either an incongruence in the system or a congruence of elements that produce the wrong performance. In order for the system to produce the desired performance, one must address some, if not all, of the elements within the system in order for change to work. Changing one element, the tool, has not worked in the past. Of the independent variables evaluated, there are obviously some things that cannot be changed, or at least, not changed easily.

The military organizational structure is unlikely to change solely to reduce evaluation inflation. It is governed by Congress and U.S. code. Its size, function, and place within the larger governmental organization has influenced its current configuration. To change it would require a massive overhaul.

The reward system is a standardized reward system enacted and voted on by Congress. Elements within services do not have individual control over the extrinsic reward system. While RAND did a study to see if the reward system could be changed (Robbert et al., 1997) to influence desired behaviors, this has not happened. This would require reward decisions (both promotion as a reward and monetary compensation) be decentralized. This is unlikely to happen based on the organizational structure of the military and the methods by which force structures are maintained.

The promotion system is systematic and standardized based on force strength requirements. An officer is considered for promotion based solely on time-in-grade. As military officers rarely stay in one location their entire career, it may be more relevant to promote at a central location based on the needs of the Air Force to ensure mobility throughout the organization. Promotion decisions are unlikely to be decentralized.

However, a potential change to the promotion system would be formalization of alternate career paths, or specifically, an elimination of the "up or out" system. These alternate career paths would allow officers to pursue a

career that does not involve promotion at the predetermined points. Consequently, there may be reduced pressure to inflate as promotion is not the only viable career path. In the military, increased rank generally means increased responsibility and increased requirements for command skill. If an officer, instead, chooses to follow a specialized path that develops depth of skill in one area at the expense of broadening opportunities, that path would have to have a commensurate reward system in place that would "reward" that choice.

This change in structure (traditional career paths) also supports current calls for expertise over broadness in certain fields (Mullen, 2009). The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, summarized in a recent speech that there are service challenges now where expertise in a field does not fit into the normal career progression of military officers (2009), resulting in potential negative career consequences.

While length of service currently results in increased pay, it flattens out at certain years of service. For an O–1, maximum pay is reached at 3 years; O–2, at 6 years; O–3 at 14 years; O–4 at 18 years; and an O–5 at 22 years. While being a 20-year Lieutenant is probably not realistic, it may be realistic to have a career O–3 or O–4. As structure interacts with the rewards system, pay would need to increase throughout, based on years of service. This increase may not be as much as that experienced with increase in rank, as the responsibilities associated with increase in rank suggests a commensurate increase in pay.

This does not mean that everyone who joins the military is guaranteed a career. Plenty of individuals join the military and then leave prior to retirement for various reasons. The military would still need a way to separate individuals who do not meet the stated standards for continued employment. The military would still need to have a system to maintain mandated force structures, through recruitment, promotion, separation, and retirements. During force reductions, a system would still need to differentiate individuals so that separation decisions could be made.

This change in structure would need to be congruent with the evaluation system to be able to identify individuals for promotion, continuance in current grade, or separation. In the current evaluation system, this element of "up or out" alone seems to lead one towards inflation based on game theory – raters generally want to give their ratees the best chance of promotion or the best chance to remain in the military for an entire career. Because of this, the structure is not the only thing that must change.

Structure interacts with the culture, people, and task/tools. These three elements of the evaluation system are so intertwined that they cannot be discussed separately. To talk about one is to describe its influence on another.

The culture of the military was described in Chapter II. Summarized, it is one of excellence, high standards, integrity, and loyalty. The tool used to evaluate an officer needs to be congruent with that element of culture. Many organizations are comprised of individuals who were consistently at the top of their training in order to reach their current position. A tool that then ranks individuals as average or below average will probably not be accepted; and if accepted, it is destined to be manipulated and inflated solely based on culture. The BARS system used by the Navy and the Marine Corps describes actions in relation to standards (Navy) or actions in themselves, without comparison to standards (Marine Corps). In this manner, standards, as high or low as they may be, are what a ratee is measured against—not an individual as "average."

Another element of culture that would require change is the expectation that one will receive "high marks." Raters must be trained to give realistic ratings; officers must accept realistic ratings; and, ultimately, promotion board members must accept and embrace the changes. If realistic appraisals are not "rewarded" with promotion, raters will not do them. Their next rational choice is to inflate.

Evaluation tools, as previously described, also need to be congruent with the other elements. BARS and rating systems are just as susceptible to inflation as any other system. Dillworth (1971, pp. 2–3) described one instance of inflation in the USA:

> About 75 percent of all captains in 1922 received rating of less than excellent. Less than 5 percent of them received the top rating of "superior" and only about 22 percent received an "excellent" rating…This breakout resulted in a typical Gaussian (distribution) curve. After 1924, the inflation problem became more apparent year by year, and, by 1945, 99 percent of the officer corps was receiving one of the top two ratings.

The AF, during the 1960s, attempted a "9–4" scale system. Performance factors were graded on a 9-point scale. Promotion potential was graded on a 4-point scale. "By 1968 ratings inflation had once again rendered the OER system ineffective. Nine out of ten officers received the highest rating, 9–4" (Syllogistics, 1987, p. I-2).

A change in tool alone will not combat inflation. It may initially curb it, but the interaction with the other elements within the system will result in inflation. Amis, Slack, and Hinings (2002, p.436) concluded that

> organizations that contained members who held values congruent with the prescribed changes were able to successfully engage in the transition process. Conversely, those organizations with members who opposed the change entered into a period of largely superficial conformity, mainly in response to certain coercive pressures, but ultimately reverted to designs more consistent with the values held within the organization.

To make the tool work as intended, the individual writing the evaluation also has to be "changed." As discussed in the game theory section, inflation is a rater's dominant strategy, whether the rater has more loyalty to the system or to the ratee. Something has to influence the rater to make a different decision. Changing the culture of an organization does not happen instantaneously and may be difficult to change (Schein, 2004, p. 14). There are, however, immediate methods to induce compliance, even if not supported by organizational culture.

Direct control of the rater's ability to give a ratee a specific score, as in the ACOM/COM system currently in use in the USA, and in the controlled OER era (Syllogistics, 1987, p. I-5) results in strategic manipulation of scores based on whether one is coming up on a promotion board or not, or receives outright resistance. Creating a "profile" of a rater based on the scores he/she has given and using that for relative rankings and/or using that as an input to the rater's own evaluation places an incentive on the rater to adhere to the system. In the Marine Corps, rating seniors' and reviewing officers' profiles are monitored to ensure they are adhering to the intent of the evaluation system. If not, they are directly contacted and warned. If their behavior does not change, their raters are contacted. This makes their actions (the written evaluation) potentially "punishable." In other words, the evaluator is now held accountable for the evaluations given.

In the Navy, an evaluation is given a score, and that score is compared to the rater's profile. On a 5-point scale, a 4.0 score with a rater average of 3.5 shows a relative rating of "above average." Conversely, a 4.0 score with a rater average of 4.5 shows a relative rating of "below average" for that rater. The Marine Corps takes that method one step further and gives both a static relative rating (computed at the time the evaluation was completed) and a dynamic relative rating (which is recomputed based on the rating senior's updated average). This is yet another method to "change" the behavior, or influence the rational choice, of the rating official. This method influences the rater's behavior not only in the present, but also in the future. Future profiles will affect past evaluations.

Rational choice theory states that without any external influence, an individual will choose either a dominant strategy or will choose to maximize the value of the worst choice. With external influence, that rational choice can be altered. That external influence, in the case of evaluations, is to make the rater's choices directly influence him or herself, to make the rater accountable for the evaluation.

In order to develop a rater's profile, the tool must support statistical computations. The current AF evaluation form is an essay-type tool; it does not support the above methods. Previous methods did support statistical computations but were abandoned due to inflation. They did not use those scores to hold the rater accountable.

To curb strategic manipulation of words or rankings, mass general reporting timelines should be implemented. While this will not eliminate inflation or manipulation, it will make it harder to do so. This would reduce the amount of individual tracking required to accomplish evaluations, but it would also increase the workload during the mass reporting dates. With a change in the evaluation method to a less essay-intensive tool and a change in the informal process of "white space" in essay blocks indicating below average performance, the mass reporting workload would be less and the overall benefits may outweigh this change.

In the end, to minimize inflation or at least be able to control inflation, multiple subsystems within the system require change. Subsystem changes must be coordinated and should happen in an appropriately sequenced manner; leadership must embrace and promulgate the changes; and raters (at all levels) must be held accountable. The change in procedures or rater's methods cannot happen individually as those who change will be at a disadvantage to those who do not change.

C.   RECOMMENDATION

In summary:

- Military structure leads to inflation based on the lack of control at lower levels
- Military promotions and reward systems support inflation
- In military culture, "average" is not good; culture supports inflation
- Human nature and rational choice theory has a dominant strategy—inflation

To counter inflation:

- Structure

    - Eliminate the "up or out" system
    - And/or, make promotion decisions at lower levels (but this has a low chance of implementation)

- Rewards

    - Reward accuracy/punish inflation
    - Reward alternative career paths

- Culture

    - Train officers to give and accept accurate evaluations
    - Demonstrate through word and deed that meeting high standards is acceptable

- People

    - Hold raters accountable through profiles
    - Provide incentives for raters to comply with the stated system

- Tool

    - Institute some method of measurement (such as BARS) that supports statistical analysis
    - Based on the heterogeneous mix in the LAF competitive category, the tool should allow for qualitative explanations (essay)

One has to ask if the current system accomplishes its stated task. Does the current evaluation system "provide meaningful feedback to individuals"? Does it provide a "reliable, long-term, cumulative record of performance and potential based on that performance"? Does it "provide officer central selection boards… sound information to assist in identifying the best qualified officers" (USAF, 2005, p. 6)? This research did not tackle the issues of determining if individuals received meaningful feedback, whether records of performance and potential were reliable, nor did it determine if the officers who have been promoted were truly the best qualified. Instead, this research assumed that un-inflated evaluations would, in turn, satisfy the stated objectives of the system.

While the current system functions, inflation is detrimental, time-consuming, requires the use of informal processes to operate, and makes it harder to easily differentiate between individuals. Because the system functions, change is not necessarily required.

To attempt to combat inflation, multiple changes have to happen; it has to be a "whole of system" approach to change. Within a system, elements interact and influence the operation of others. Changing only the evaluation tool in isolation has not solved the inflation problem. At a minimum, the tool must either be consistent with the culture or the culture must change; the people within the system must be persuaded to correctly use the tool, which should include personal accountability as a measure of correct use. The structure of the organization (larger military organization) and the promotion and award systems, while also potential subsystems to change, are unlikely to change only to "combat inflation;" changing the structure of the larger military organization would affect the other services and would likely require other, more important reasons for that magnitude of change. Of all the independent variables studied, these three (culture, tool, and people) are the easiest to alter at a service level.

D.   RECOMMENDED FURTHER STUDY

Throughout this research, complimentary ideas for further research emerged. These ideas (or questions) delve deeper into various elements that influence evaluation inflation or further refine how changes may be made to the current system.

- How exactly would the changes in the subsystems need to be sequenced in order to minimize upheaval, elicit support for change, and increase the likelihood of acceptance and proper implementation?

- Is there a difference between training evaluations and yearly evaluations with respect to levels of inflation? If so, what elements in that system of evaluation are congruent with accuracy as opposed to inflation? If so, can those elements be exported to the larger system of yearly evaluation?

- Would a change of competitive categories encourage more accurate evaluations by limiting competition to only within specialties (no more comparison across groups, only within)?

- Are the right people in the right jobs—have the evaluation, promotion, and assignment systems been effective in managing human resources? Has inflation affected the accuracy of the current systems?

- Does inflation correlate to times of growth or contraction in military force strength? Is there a stronger tendency to inflate during times of contraction where opportunities for continuation and promotion are limited? Is there less inflation when promotion and continuation rates are high?

These further research ideas are by no means exhaustive, but only serve to illuminate the multitude of other issues influencing inflation in evaluations and the need to look at factors outside the evaluation tool when approaching the inflation issue.

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- Sec. 616: Recommendations for promotion by selection boards
- Sec. 619: Eligibility for consideration for promotion: time-in-grade and other requirements
- Sec. 621: Competitive categories for promotion
- Sec. 622: Numbers to be recommended for promotion
- Sec. 623: Establishment of promotion zones
- Sec. 624: Promotions: how made
- Sec. 631: Effect of failure of selection for promotion: first lieutenants and lieutenants (junior grade)
- Sec. 632: Effect of failure of selection for promotion: captains and majors of the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps and lieutenants and lieutenant commanders of the Navy
- Sec. 633: Retirement for years of service: regular lieutenant colonels and commanders
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APPENDIX

A.   AIR FORCE EVALUATION FORM

OFFICER PERFORMANCE REPORT   *(Lt thru Col)*

I. RATEE IDENTIFICATION DATA   *(Read AFI 36-2406 carefully before filling in any item)*

1. NAME *(Last, First, Middle Initial)*	2. SSN	3. GRADE	4. DAFSC	5. REASON FOR REPORT	6. PAS CODE

7. ORGANIZATION, COMMAND, LOCATION, AND COMPONENT	8. PERIOD OF REPORT THRU	9. NO. DAYS SUPV.

II. JOB DESCRIPTION   *(Limit text to 4 lines)*   10. SRID
DUTY TITLE

III. PERFORMANCE FACTORS   DOES NOT MEET STANDARDS   MEETS STANDARDS   FITNESS EXEMPTION

Job Knowledge, Leadership Skills, Professional Qualities, Organizational Skills, Judgment and Decisions, Communication Skills, and Physical Fitness   *(see reverse if marked Does Not Meet Standards)*

IV. RATER OVERALL ASSESSMENT   *(Limit text to 6 lines)*

Last performance feedback was accomplished on: _____   (IAW AFI 36-2406) (If not accomplished, state the reason)

NAME, GRADE, BR OF SVC, ORGN, COMMAND & LOCATION	DUTY TITLE	DATE
	SSN SIGNATURE	

V. ADDITIONAL RATER OVERALL ASSESSMENT   *(Limit text to 4 lines)*   CONCUR   NON-CONCUR

NAME, GRADE, BR OF SVC, ORGN, COMMAND & LOCATION	DUTY TITLE	DATE
	SSN SIGNATURE	

VI. REVIEWER   *(If required, limit text to 4 lines)*   CONCUR   NON-CONCUR

NAME, GRADE, BR OF SVC, ORGN, COMMAND & LOCATION	DUTY TITLE	DATE
	SSN SIGNATURE	

VII. FUNCTIONAL EXAMINER/AIR FORCE ADVISOR   FUNCTIONAL EXAMINER   AIR FORCE ADVISOR
(Indicate applicable review by marking the appropriate box)

NAME, GRADE, BR OF SVC, ORGN, COMMAND & LOCATION	DUTY TITLE	DATE
	SSN SIGNATURE	

VIII. RATEE'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I understand my signature does not constitute agreement or disagreement. I acknowledge all required feedback was accomplished during the reporting period and upon receipt of this report.	Yes No	SIGNATURE	DATE

AF FORM 707, 20070625   PREVIOUS EDITIONS ARE OBSOLETE (707A and 707B)   PRIVACY ACT INFORMATION: The information in this form is FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY. Protect IAW the Privacy Act of 1974.

RATEE NAME:

IX. PERFORMANCE FACTORS (If Section III is marked Does Not Meet Standards, fill in applicable block[s])

DOES NOT MEET STANDARDS

1. Job Knowledge. Has knowledge required to perform duties effectively. Strives to improve knowledge. Applies knowledge to handle non-routine situations. ☐

2. Leadership Skills. Sets and enforces standards. Works well with others. Fosters teamwork. Displays initiative. Self-confident. Motivates subordinates. Has respect and confidence of subordinates. Fair and consistent in evaluation of subordinates. ☐

3. Professional Qualities. Exhibits loyalty, discipline, dedication, integrity, honesty, and officership. Adheres to Air Force standards. Accepts personal responsibility. Is fair and objective. ☐

4. Organizational Skills. Plans, coordinates, schedules and uses resources effectively. Meets suspenses. Schedules work for self and others equitably and effectively. Anticipates and solves problems. ☐

5. Judgment and Decisions. Makes timely and accurate decisions. Emphasizes logic in decision making. Retains composure in stressful situations. Recognizes opportunities. Adheres to safety and occupational health requirements. Acts to take advantage of opportunities. ☐

6. Communication Skills. Listens, speaks, and writes effectively. ☐

7. Physical Fitness. Maintains Air Force physical fitness standards. ☐

X. REMARKS (use this section to spell out acronyms from the front)

XI. REFERRAL REPORT (Complete only if report contains referral comments or the overall standards block is marked as does not meet standards)

I am referring this OPR to you according to AFI 36-2406, para 3.9. It contains comment(s)/rating(s) that make(s) the report a referral as defined in AFI 36-2406, para, 3.9. Specifically, _____

Acknowledge receipt by signing and dating below. Your signature merely acknowledges that a referral report has been rendered; it does not imply acceptance of or agreement with the ratings or comments on the report. Once signed, you are entitled to a copy of this memo. You may submit rebuttal comments. Send your written comments to:

not later than 10 calendar days (30 for non-EAD members) from your date below. If you need additional time, you may request an extension from the individual named above. You may submit attachments (limit to 10 pages), but they must directly relate to the reason this report was referred. Pertinent attachments not maintained elsewhere will remain attached to the report for file in your personnel record. Copies of previous reports, etc. submitted as attachments will be removed from your rebuttal package prior to filing since these documents are already filed in your records. Your rebuttal comments/attachments may not contain any reflection on the character, conduct, integrity, or motives of the evaluator unless you can fully substantiate and document them. Contact the MPF career enhancement section, or the AF Contact Center if you require any assistance in preparing your reply to the referral report. It is important for you to be aware that receiving a referral report may affect your eligibility for other personnel related actions (e.g. assignments, promotions, etc.). You may consult your commander and/or MPF or Air Force Contact Center if you desire more information on this subject. If you believe this report is inaccurate, unjust, or unfairly prejudicial to your career, you may apply for a review of the report under AFI 36-2401, Correction of Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Reports, once the report becomes a matter of record as defined in AFI 36-2406, Attachment 1.

NAME, GRADE, BR OF SVC OF REFERRING EVALUATOR	DUTY TITLE	DATE
	SIGNATURE	

SIGNATURE OF RATEE	DATE

INSTRUCTIONS

ALL: Recommendations must be based on performance and the potential based on that performance. Promotion recommendations are prohibited. Do not comment on completion of or enrollment in Developmental Education, advanced education, previous or anticipated promotion recommendations on AF Form 709, OPR endorsement levels, family activities, marital status, race, sex, ethnic origin, age, or religion. Evaluators enter only the last four numbers of SSN.

RATER: Focus your evaluation in Section IV on what the officer did, how well he or she did it, and how the officer contributed to mission accomplishment. Write in concise "bullet" format. Your comments in Section IV may include recommendations for assignment. Provide a copy of the report to the ratee prior to the report becoming a matter of record and provide follow-up feedback to let the ratee know how their performance resulted in this final product.

ADDITIONAL RATER: Carefully review the rater's evaluation to ensure it is accurate, unbiased and uninflated. If you disagree, you may ask the rater to review his or her evaluation. You may not direct a change in the evaluation. If you still disagree with the rater, mark "NON-CONCUR" and explain. You may include recommendations for assignment.

REVIEWER: Carefully review the rater's and additional rater's ratings and comments. If their evaluations are accurate, unbiased and uninflated, mark "CONCUR" and sign the form. If you disagree with previous evaluators, you may ask them to review their evaluations. You may not direct them to change their appraisals. If you still disagree with the additional rater, mark "NON-CONCUR" and explain in Section VI. Do not use "NON-CONCUR" simply to provide comments on the report.

RATEE: Your signature is merely an acknowledgement of receipt of this report. It does not constitute concurrence. If you disagree with the content, you may file an evaluation appeal through the Evaluation Reports Appeals Board IAW AFI 36-2401 (Correcting Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Reports), or through the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records IAW AFI 36-2603 (Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records) and AFPAM 36-2607 (Applicants' Guide to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR).

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

AUTHORITY: Title 10 United States Code, Section 8013 and Secretary of the Air Force and Executive Order 9397, 22 November 1943.

PURPOSE: Information is needed for verification of the individual's name and Social Security Number (SSN) as captured on the form at the time of rating.

ROUTINE USES: None. RATIONALE: This information will not be disclosed outside DoD channels.

DISCLOSURE: Disclosure is mandatory; SSN is used for positive identification.

AF FORM 707, 20070625   PREVIOUS EDITIONS ARE OBSOLETE (707A and 707B)

PRIVACY ACT INFORMATION: The information in this form is FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY. Protect IAW the Privacy Act of 1974.

B. ARMY EVALUATION FORM

OFFICER EVALUATION REPORT
For use of this form, see AR 623-3; the proponent agency is DCS, G-1.

PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

a. NAME *(Last, First, Middle Initial)*   b. SSN   c. RANK   d. DATE OF RANK*(YYYYMMDD)*   e. BRANCH   f. *DESIGNATED / PMOS (WO) SPECIALTIES*

g. 1. UNIT, ORG., STATION, ZIP CODE OR APO, MAJOR COMMAND   g. 2. STATUS CODE   h. REASON FOR SUBMISSION

i. PERIOD COVERED — FROM *(YYYYMMDD)* — THRU *(YYYYMMDD)*   j. RATED MONTHS   k. NONRATED CODES   l. NO. OF ENCL   m. RATED OFFICER'S AKO EMAIL ADDRESS *(.gov or mil)*   n. UIC   o. CMD CODE   p. PSB CODE

PART II - AUTHENTICATION *(Rated officer's signature verifies officer has seen completed OER Parts I-VII and the admin data is correct)*

a. NAME OF RATER *(Last, First, MI)*   SSN   RANK   POSITION   SIGNATURE   DATE *(YYYYMMDD)*

b. NAME OF INTERMEDIATE RATER *(Last, First, MI)*   SSN   RANK   POSITION   SIGNATURE   DATE *(YYYYMMDD)*

c. NAME OF SENIOR RATER *(Last, First, MI)*   SSN   RANK   POSITION   SIGNATURE   DATE *(YYYYMMDD)*

SENIOR RATER'S ORGANIZATION   BRANCH   SENIOR RATER TELEPHONE NUMBER   E-MAIL ADDRESS *(.gov or .mil)*

d. This is a referred report, do you wish to make comments? ☐ ☐ Yes, comments are attached ☐ No   e. SIGNATURE OF RATED OFFICER   DATE *(YYYYMMDD)*

PART III - DUTY DESCRIPTION

a. PRINCIPAL DUTY TITLE   b. POSITION AOC/BR

c. SIGNIFICANT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. REFER TO PART IVa, DA FORM 67-9-1.

PART IV - PERFORMANCE EVALUATION - PROFESSIONALISM *(Rater)*

CHARACTER Disposition of the leader: combination of values, attributes, and skills affecting leader actions

a. ARMY VALUES *(Comments mandatory for all "NO" entries. Use PART Vb.)*

	Yes	No		Yes	No
1. HONOR: Adherence to the Army's publicly declared code of values			5. RESPECT: Promotes dignity, consideration, fairness, & EO		
2. INTEGRITY: Possesses high personal moral standards; honest in word and deed			6. SELFLESS-SERVICE: Places Army priorities before self		
3. COURAGE: Manifests physical and moral bravery			7. DUTY: Fulfills professional, legal, and moral obligations		
4. LOYALTY: Bears true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, the unit, and the soldier					

b. LEADER ATTRIBUTES / SKILLS / ACTIONS: First, mark "YES" or "NO" for each block. Second, choose a total of six that best describe the rated officer. Select one from ATTRIBUTES, two from SKILLS (Competence), and three from ACTIONS (LEADERSHIP). Place an "X" in the appropriate numbered box with optional comments in PART Vb. **Comments are mandatory in Part Vb for all "NO" entries.**

b.1. *ATTRIBUTES (Select 1)* — Fundamental qualities and characteristics

1. MENTAL	YES NO	2 PHYSICAL	YES NO	3. EMOTIONAL	YES NO
Possesses desire, will, initiative, and discipline		Maintains appropriate level of physical fitness and military bearing		Displays self-control; calm under pressure	

b.2 *SKILLS (Competence)* **(Select 2)** — Skill development is part of self-development; prerequisite to action

1. CONCEPTUAL	YES NO	2. INTERPERSONAL	YES NO	3. TECHNICAL	YES NO
Demonstrates sound judgment, critical/creative thinking, moral reasoning		Shows skill with people: coaching, teaching, counseling, motivating and empowering		Possesses the necessary expertise to accomplish all tasks and functions	

4. TACTICAL Demonstrates proficiency in required professional knowledge, judgment, and warfighting	YES NO

b.3. *ACTIONS (LEADERSHIP) (Select 3)* Major activities leaders perform: influencing, operating, and improving

INFLUENCING — Method of reaching goals while operating / improving	1. COMMUNICATING YES NO Displays good oral, written, and listening skills for individuals / groups	2. DECISION-MAKING YES NO Employs sound judgment, logical reasoning and uses resources wisely	3. MOTIVATING YES NO Inspires, motivates, and guides others toward mission accomplishment
OPERATING — Short-term mission accomplishment	4. PLANNING YES NO Develops detailed, executable plans that are feasible, acceptable, and suitable	5. EXECUTING YES NO Shows tactical proficiency, meets mission standards, and takes care of people/resources	6. ASSESSING YES NO Uses after-action and evaluation tools to facilitate consistent improvement
IMPROVING — Long-term improvement in the Army its people and organizations	7. DEVELOPING YES NO Invests adequate time and effort to develop individual subordinates as leaders	8. BUILDING YES NO Spends time and resources improving teams, groups and units; fosters ethical climate	9. LEARNING YES NO Seeks self-improvement and organizational growth; envisioning, adapting and leading change

c. APFT: DATE: HEIGHT: WEIGHT:

d. OFFICER DEVELOPMENT - *MANDATORY YES OR NO ENTRY FOR RATERS OF CPTs, LTs, CW2s, AND WO1s.*
WERE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS RECORDED ON DA FORM 67-9-1a AND QUARTERLY FOLLOW-UP COUNSELINGS CONDUCTED?   ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NA

DA FORM 67-9, MAR 2006   PREVIOUS EDITIONS ARE OBSOLETE.   Page 1 of 2   APD v3.01

PART V - PERFORMANCE AND POTENTIAL EVALUATION (Rater)

a. EVALUATE THE RATED OFFICER'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE RATING PERIOD AND HIS/HER POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION

☐ OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE, MUST PROMOTE   ☐ SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE, PROMOTE   ☐ UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE, DO NOT PROMOTE   ☐ OTHER (Explain)

b. COMMENT ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PERFORMANCE, REFER TO PART III, DA FORM 67-9 AND PART IVa, b, AND PART Vb, DA FORM 67-9-1.

c. COMMENT ON POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION.

d. IDENTIFY ANY UNIQUE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OR AREAS OF EXPERTISE OF VALUE TO THE ARMY THAT THIS OFFICER POSSESSES. FOR ARMY COMPETITIVE CATEGORY CPT ALSO INDICATE A POTENTIAL CAREER FIELD FOR FUTURE SERVICE.

PART VI - INTERMEDIATE RATER

PART VII - SENIOR RATER

a. EVALUATE THE RATED OFFICER'S PROMOTION POTENTIAL TO THE NEXT HIGHER GRADE

I currently senior rate _____ officer(s) in this grade
A completed DA Form 67-9-1 was received with this report and considered in my evaluation and review   ☐ YES   ☐ NO (Explain in c)

☐ BEST QUALIFIED   ☐ FULLY QUALIFIED   ☐ DO NOT PROMOTE   ☐ OTHER (Explain below))

b. POTENTIAL COMPARED WITH OFFICERS SENIOR RATED IN SAME GRADE (OVERPRINTED BY DA)

☐ ABOVE CENTER OF MASS
(Less than 50% in top box; Center of Mass if 50% or more in top box)

☐ CENTER OF MASS

☐ BELOW CENTER OF MASS RETAIN

☐ BELOW CENTER OF MASS DO NOT RETAIN

c. COMMENT ON PERFORMANCE/POTENTIAL

d. LIST THREE FUTURE ASSIGNMENTS FOR WHICH THIS OFFICER IS BEST SUITED.
FOR ARMY COMPETITIVE CATEGORY CPT, ALSO INDICATE A POTENTIAL CAREER FIELD FOR FUTURE SERVICE.

C.   NAVY EVALUATION FORM

FITNESS REPORT & COUNSELING RECORD   (E7 - O6)   RCS BUPERS 1610-1

| 1. Name (Last, First MI Suffix) | | 2. Grade/Rate | 3. Desig | | 4. SSN |

| 5. ☐ ACT ☐ TAR ☐ INACT AT/ADSW/265 ☐ | 6. UIC | 7. Ship/Station | | 8. Promotion Status | 9. Date Reported |

Occasion for Report				Period of Report	
10. Periodic ☐	Detachment 11. of Individual ☐	Detachment of 12. Reporting Senior ☐	13. Special ☐	14. From:	15. To:
16. Not Observed Report ☐	Type of Report 17. Regular ☐	18. Concurrent ☐	19. Ops Cdr ☐	20. Physical Readiness	21. Billet Subcategory (if any)

| 22. Reporting Senior (Last, FI MI) | 23. Grade | 24. Desig | 25. Title | | 26. UIC | 27. SSN |

28. Command employment and command achievements.

29. Primary/Collateral/Watchstanding duties. (Enter primary duty abbreviation in box.)

| For Mid-term Counseling Use. (When completing FITREP enter 30 and 31 from counseling worksheet sign 32.) | 30. Date Counseled | 31. Counselor | 32. Signature of Individual Counseled |

PERFORMANCE TRAITS: 1.0 - Below standards/not progressing or UNSAT in any one standard; 2.0 - Does not yet meet all 3.0 standards; 3.0 - Meets all 3.0 standards; 4.0 - Exceeds most 3.0 standards; 5.0 - Meets overall criteria and most of the specific standards for 5.0. Standards are not all inclusive.

PERFORMANCE TRAITS	1.0* Below Standards	2.0 Pro-gressing	3.0 Meets Standards	4.0 Above Standards	5.0 Greatly Exceeds Standards
33. PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE: Professional knowledge, proficiency, and qualifications. NOB ☐	- Lacks basic professional knowledge to perform effectively. - Cannot apply basic skills. - Fails to develop professionally or achieve timely qualifications. ☐	- - - ☐	- Has thorough professional knowledge. - Competently performs both routine and new tasks. - Steadily improves skills, achieves timely qualifications. ☐	- - - ☐	- Recognized expert, sought after to solve difficult problems. - Exceptionally skilled, develops and executes innovative ideas. - Achieves early/highly advanced qualifications. ☐
34. COMMAND OR ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY: Contributing to growth and development, human worth, community. NOB ☐	- Actions counter to Navy's retention/reenlistment goals. - Uninvolved with mentoring or professional development of subordinates. - Actions counter to good order and discipline and negatively affect Command/Organizational climate. - Demonstrates exclusionary behavior. Fails to value differences from cultural diversity. ☐	- - - - ☐	- Positive leadership supports Navy's increased retention goals. Active in decreasing attrition. - Actions adequately encourage/support subordinates' personal/professional growth. - Demonstrates appreciation for contributions of Navy personnel. Positive influence on Command climate. - Values differences as strengths. Fosters atmosphere of acceptance/inclusion per EO/EEO policy. ☐	- - - - ☐	- Measurably contributes to Navy's increased retention and reduced attrition objectives. - Proactive leader/exemplary mentor. Involved in subordinates' personal development leading to professional growth/sustained commitment. - Initiates support programs for military, civilian, and families to achieve exceptional Command and Organizational climate. - The model of achievement. Develops unit cohesion by valuing differences as strengths. ☐
35. MILITARY BEARING/ CHARACTER: Appearance, conduct, physical fitness, adherence to Navy Core Values. NOB ☐	- Consistently unsatisfactory appearance. - Unsatisfactory demeanor or conduct. - Unable to meet one or more physical readiness standards. - Fails to live up to one or more Navy Core Values: HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT. ☐	- - - ☐	- Excellent personal appearance. - Excellent demeanor or conduct. - Complies with physical readiness program. - Always lives up to Navy Core Values: HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT. ☐	- - - ☐	- Exemplary personal appearance. - Exemplary representative of Navy. - A leader in physical readiness. - Exemplifies Navy Core Values: HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT. ☐
36. TEAMWORK: Contributions towards team building and team results. NOB ☐	- Creates conflict, unwilling to work with others, puts self above team. - Fails to understand team goals or teamwork techniques. - Does not take direction well. ☐	- - - ☐	- Reinforces others' efforts, meets personal commitments to team. - Understands team goals, employs good teamwork techniques. - Accepts and offers team direction. ☐	- - - ☐	- Team builder, inspires cooperation and progress. - Talented mentor, focuses goals and techniques for team. - The best at accepting and offering team direction. ☐
37. MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT AND INITIATIVE: Taking initiative, planning/prioritizing, achieving mission. NOB ☐	- Lacks initiative. - Unable to plan or prioritize. - Does not maintain readiness. - Fails to get the job done. ☐	- - - - ☐	- Takes initiative to meet goals. - Plans/prioritizes effectively. - Maintains high state of readiness. - Always gets the job done. ☐	- - - - ☐	- Develops innovative ways to accomplish mission. - Plans/prioritizes with exceptional skill and foresight. - Maintains superior readiness, even with limited resources. - Gets jobs done earlier and far better than expected. ☐

NAVPERS 1610/2 (Rev. 03-02)

FITNESS REPORT & COUNSELING RECORD   (E7 - O6)   (cont'd)

1. Name (Last, First MI Suffix)	2. Grade/Rate	3. Desig	4. SSN

PERFORMANCE TRAITS	1.0* Below Standards	2.0 Pro-gressing	3.0 Meets Standards	4.0 Above Standards	5.0 Greatly Exceeds Standards
38. LEADERSHIP: Organizing, motivating and developing others to accomplish goals. NOB ☐	- Neglects growth/development or welfare of subordinates. - Fails to organize, creates problems for subordinates. - Does not set or achieve goals relevant to command mission and vision. - Lacks ability to cope with or tolerate stress. - Inadequate communicator. - Tolerates hazards or unsafe practices. ☐	- - - - - - ☐	- Effectively stimulates growth/development in subordinates. - Organizes successfully, implementing process improvements and efficiencies. - Sets/achieves useful, realistic goals that support command mission. - Performs well in stressful situations. - Clear, timely communicator. - Ensures safety of personnel and equipment. ☐	- - - - - - - ☐	- Inspiring motivator and trainer, subordinates reach highest level of growth and development. - Superb organizer, great foresight, develops process improvements and efficiencies. - Leadership achievements dramatically further command mission and vision. - Perseveres through the toughest challenges and inspires others. - Exceptional communicator. - Makes subordinates safety-conscious, maintains top safety record. - Constantly improves the personal and professional lives of others. ☐
39. TACTICAL PERFORMANCE: (Warfare qualified officers only) Basic and tactical employment of weapons systems. NOB ☐	- Has difficulty attaining qualifications expected for rank and experience. - Has difficulty in ship(s), aircraft or weapons systems employment. Below others in knowledge and employment. - Warfare skills in specialty are below standards compared to others of same rank and experience. ☐	- - - ☐	- Attains qualifications as required and expected. - Capably employs ship(s), aircraft, or weapons systems. Equal to others in warfare knowledge and employment. - Warfare skills in specialty equal to others of same rank and experience. ☐	- - - ☐	- Fully qualified at appropriate level for rank and experience. - Innovatively employs ship(s), aircraft, or weapons systems. Well above others in warfare knowledge and employment. - Warfare skills in specialty exceed others of same rank and experience. ☐

40. I recommend screening this individual for next career milestone(s) as follows: (maximum of two)
Recommendations may be for competitive schools or duty assignments such as: LCPO, DEPT CPO, SEA, CMC, CWO, LDO, Dept Head, XO, OIC, CO, Major Command, War College, PG School.

41. COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE. * All 1.0 marks , three 2.0 marks, and 2.0 marks in Block 34 must be specifically substantiated in comments. Comments must be verifiable. Font must be 10 or 12 pitch (10 to 12 point) only. Use upper and lower case.

Promotion Recommendation	NOB	Significant Problems	Progressing	Promotable	Must Promote	Early Promote	44. Reporting Senior Address
42. INDIVIDUAL							
43. SUMMARY	✗						

45. Signature of Reporting Senior Date:	46. Signature of individual evaluated. " I have seen this report, been apprised of my performance, and understand my right to make a statement." I intend to submit a statement ☐ do not intend to submit a statement ☐ Date:
Member Trait Average: Summary Group Average:	

47. Typed name, grade, command, UIC, and signature of Regular Reporting Senior on Concurrent Report

Date:

NAVPERS 1610/2 (Rev. 3-02)

D. MARINE CORPS EVALUATION FORM

COMMANDANT'S GUIDANCE

**DO NOT STAPLE
THIS FORM**

The completed fitness report is the most important information component in manpower management. It is the primary means of evaluating a Marine's performance and is the Commandant's primary tool for the selection of personnel for promotion, augmentation, resident schooling, command, and duty assignments. Therefore, the completion of this report is one of an officer's most critical responsibilities. Inherent in this duty is the commitment of each Reporting Senior and Reviewing Officer to ensure the integrity of the system by giving close attention to accurate marking and timely reporting. Every officer serves a role in the scrupulous maintenance of this evaluation system, ultimately important to both the individual and the Marine Corps. Inflationary markings only serve to dilute the actual value of each report. Reviewing Officers will not concur with inflated reports.

A. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

1. Marine Reported On:
   a. Last Name   b. First Name   c. MI   d. SSN   e. Grade   f. DOR   g. PMOS   h. BILMOS

2. Organization:
   a. MCC   b. RUC   c. Unit Description

3. Occasion and Period Covered:
   a. OCC   b. From   To   c. Type

4. Duty Assignment (descriptive title):

5. Special
   a. Adverse   b. Not Observed   c. Extended

6. Marine Subject Of:
   a. Commendatory Material   b. Derogatory Material   c. Disciplinary Action

7. Recommended For Promotion:
   a. Yes   b. No   c. N/A

8. Special Information:
   a. QUAL
   b. PFT
   c. Status
   d. HT(in.)
   e. WT
   f. Body Fat
   g. Reserve Component
   h. Future Use
   i. Future Use

9. Duty Preference:
   a. Code   b. Descriptive Title
   1st
   2nd
   3rd

10. Reporting Senior:
    a. Last Name   b. Init   c. Service   d. SSN   e. Grade   f. Duty Assignment

11. Reviewing Officer:
    a. Last Name   b. Init   c. Service   d. SSN   e. Grade   f. Duty Assignment

B. BILLET DESCRIPTION

C. BILLET ACCOMPLISHMENTS

D. MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT

1. PERFORMANCE. Results achieved during the reporting period. How well those duties inherent to a Marine's billet, plus all additional duties, formally and informally assigned, were carried out. Reflects a Marine's aptitude, competence, and commitment to the unit's success above personal reward. Indicators are time and resource management, task prioritization, and tenacity to achieve positive ends consistently.

ADV						N/O
	Meets requirements of billet and additional duties. Aptitude, commitment, and competence meet expectations. Results maintain status quo.		Consistently produces quality results while measurably improving unit performance. Habitually makes effective use of time and resources; improves billet procedures and products. Positive impact extends beyond billet expectations.		Results far surpass expectations. Recognizes and exploits new resources; creates opportunities. Emulated; sought after as an expert with influence beyond unit. Impact significant; innovative approaches to problems produce significant gains in quality and efficiency.	

A ☐   B ☐   C ☐   D ☐   E ☐   F ☐   G ☐   H ☐

2. PROFICIENCY. Demonstrates technical knowledge and practical skill in the execution of the Marine's overall duties. Combines training, education and experience. Translates skills into actions which contribute to accomplishing tasks and missions. Imparts knowledge to others. Grade dependent.

ADV						N/O
	Competent. Possesses the requisite range of skills and knowledge commensurate with grade and experience. Understands and articulates basic functions related to mission accomplishment.		Demonstrates mastery of all required skills. Expertise, education and experience consistently enhance mission accomplishment. Innovative troubleshooter and problem solver. Effectively imparts skills to subordinates.		True expert in field. Knowledge and skills impact far beyond those of peers. Translates broad-based education and experience into forward thinking, innovative actions. Makes immeasurable impact on mission accomplishment. Peerless teacher, selflessly imparts expertise to subordinates, peers, and seniors.	

A ☐   B ☐   C ☐   D ☐   E ☐   F ☐   G ☐   H ☐

JUSTIFICATION:

E. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER

1. COURAGE. Moral or physical strength to overcome danger, fear, difficulty or anxiety. Personal acceptance of responsibility and accountability, placing conscience over competing interests regardless of consequences. Conscious, overriding decision to risk bodily harm or death to accomplish the mission or save others. The will to persevere despite uncertainty.

ADV						N/O
	Demonstrates inner strength and acceptance of responsibility commensurate with scope of duties and experience. Willing to face moral or physical challenges in pursuit of mission accomplishment.		Guided by conscience in all actions. Proven ability to overcome danger, fear, difficulty or anxiety. Exhibits bravery in the face of adversity and uncertainty. Not deterred by morally difficult situations or hazardous responsibilities.		Uncommon bravery and capacity to overcome obstacles and inspire others in the face of moral dilemma or life-threatening danger. Demonstrated under the most adverse conditions. Selfless. Always places conscience over competing interests regardless of physical or personal consequences.	

A ☐   B ☐   C ☐   D ☐   E ☐   F ☐   G ☐   H ☐

2. EFFECTIVENESS UNDER STRESS. Thinking, functioning and leading effectively under conditions of physical and/or mental pressure. Maintaining composure appropriate for the situation, while displaying steady purpose of action, enabling one to inspire others while continuing to lead under adverse conditions. Physical and emotional strength, resilience and endurance are elements.

ADV						N/O
	Exhibits discipline and stability under pressure. Judgment and effective problem-solving skills are evident.		Consistently demonstrates maturity, mental agility, and willpower during periods of adversity. Provides order to chaos through the application of intuition, problem-solving skills, and leadership. Composure reassures others.		Demonstrates seldom-matched presence of mind under the most demanding circumstances. Stabilizes any situation through the resolute and timely application of direction, focus and personal presence.	

A ☐   B ☐   C ☐   D ☐   E ☐   F ☐   G ☐   H ☐

3. INITIATIVE. Action in the absence of specific direction. Seeing what needs to be done and acting without prompting. The instinct to begin a task and follow through energetically on one's own accord. Being creative, proactive and decisive. Transforming opportunity into action.

ADV						N/O
	Demonstrates willingness to take action in the absence of specific direction. Acts commensurate with grade, training and experience.		Self-motivated and action-oriented. Foresight and energy consistently transform opportunity into action. Develops creative, innovative solutions. Acts without prompting. Self-starter.		Highly motivated and proactive. Displays exceptional awareness of surroundings and environment. Uncanny ability to anticipate mission requirements and quickly formulate original, far-reaching solutions. Always takes decisive, effective action.	

A ☐   B ☐   C ☐   D ☐   E ☐   F ☐   G ☐   H ☐

JUSTIFICATION:

1. Marine Reported On:
a. Last Name   b. First Name   c. MI   d. SSN   2. Occasion and Period Covered:
        a.OCC   b. From   To

F. LEADERSHIP

1. LEADING SUBORDINATES. The inseparable relationship between leader and led. The application of leadership principles to provide direction and motivate subordinates. Using authority, persuasion, and personality to influence subordinates to accomplish assigned tasks. Sustaining motivation and morale while maximizing subordinates' performance.

| ADV | Engaged; provides instructions and directs execution. Seeks to accomplish mission in ways that sustain motivation and morale. Actions contribute to unit effectiveness. | Achieves a highly effective balance between direction and delegation. Effectively tasks subordinates and clearly delineates standards expected. Enhances performance through constructive supervision. Fosters motivation and enhances morale. Builds and sustains teams that successfully meet mission requirements. Encourages initiative and candor among subordinates. | Promotes creativity and energy among subordinates by striking the ideal balance of direction and delegation. Achieves highest levels of performance from subordinates by encouraging individual initiative. Engenders willing subordination, loyalty, and trust that allow subordinates to overcome their perceived limitations. Personal leadership fosters highest levels of motivation and morale, ensuring mission accomplishment even in the most difficult circumstances. | N/O |

A ☐   B ☐   C ☐   D ☐   E ☐   F ☐   G ☐   H ☐

2. DEVELOPING SUBORDINATES. Commitment to train, educate, and challenge all Marines regardless of race, religion, ethnic background, or gender. Mentorship. Cultivating professional and personal development of subordinates. Developing team players and esprit de corps. Ability to combine teaching and coaching. Creating an atmosphere tolerant of mistakes in the course of learning.

| ADV | Maintains an environment that allows personal and professional development. Ensures subordinates participate in all mandated development programs. | Develops and institutes innovative programs, to include PME, that emphasize personal and professional development of subordinates. Challenges subordinates to exceed their perceived potential thereby enhancing unit morale and effectiveness. Creates an environment where all Marines are confident to learn through trial and error. As a mentor, prepares subordinates for increased responsibilities and duties. | Widely recognized and emulated as a teacher, coach and leader. Any Marine would desire to serve with this Marine because they know they will grow personally and professionally. Subordinate and unit performance far surpassed expected results due to MRO's mentorship and team building talents. Attitude toward subordinate development is infectious, extending beyond the unit. | N/O |

A ☐   B ☐   C ☐   D ☐   E ☐   F ☐   G ☐   H ☐

3. SETTING THE EXAMPLE. The most visible facet of leadership: how well a Marine serves as a role model for all others. Personal action demonstrates the highest standards of conduct, ethical behavior, fitness, and appearance. Bearing, demeanor, and self-discipline are elements.

| ADV | Maintains Marine Corps standards for appearance, weight, and uniform wear. Sustains required level of physical fitness. Adheres to the tenets of the Marine | Personal conduct on and off duty reflects highest Marine Corps standards of integrity, bearing and appearance. Character is exceptional. Actively seeks self-improvement in wide-ranging areas. Dedication to duty and professional example encourage others' self-improvement efforts. | Model Marine, frequently emulated. Exemplary conduct, behavior, and actions are tone-setting. An inspiration to subordinates, peers, and seniors. Remarkable dedication to improving self and others. | N/O |

A ☐   B ☐   C ☐   D ☐   E ☐   F ☐   G ☐   H ☐

4. ENSURING WELL-BEING OF SUBORDINATES. Genuine interest in the well-being of Marines. Efforts enhance subordinates ability to concentrate/focus on unit mission accomplishment. Concern for family readiness is inherent. The importance placed on welfare of subordinates is based on the belief that Marines take care of their own.

| ADV | Deals confidently with issues pertinent to subordinate welfare and recognizes suitable courses of action that support subordinates' well-being. Applies available resources, allowing subordinates to effectively concentrate on the mission. | Instills and/or reinforces a sense of responsibility among junior Marines for themselves and their subordinates. Actively fosters the development of and uses support systems for subordinates which improve their ability to contribute to unit mission accomplishment. Efforts to enhance subordinate welfare improve the unit's ability to accomplish its mission. | Noticeably enhances subordinates well-being, resulting in a measurable increase in unit effectiveness. Maximizes unit and base resources to provide subordinates with the best support available. Proactive approach serves to energize unit members to "take care of their own," thereby correcting potential problems before they can hinder subordinates' effectiveness. Widely recognized for techniques and policies that produce results and build morale. Builds strong family atmosphere. Puts motto *Mission first, Marines always*, into action. | N/O |

A ☐   B ☐   C ☐   D ☐   E ☐   F ☐   G ☐   H ☐

5. COMMUNICATION SKILLS. The efficient transmission and receipt of thoughts and ideas that enable and enhance leadership. Equal importance given to listening, speaking, writing, and critical reading skills. Interactive, allowing one to perceive problems and situations, provide concise guidance, and express complex ideas in a form easily understood by everyone. Allows subordinates to ask questions, raise issues and concerns and venture opinions. Contributes to a leader's ability to motivate as well as counsel.

| ADV | Skilled in receiving and conveying information. Communicates effectively in performance of duties. | Clearly articulates thoughts and ideas, verbally and in writing. Communication in all forms is accurate, intelligible, concise, and timely. Communicates with clarity and verve, ensuring understanding of intent or purpose. Encourages and considers the contributions of others. | Highly developed facility in verbal communication. Adept in composing written documents of the highest quality. Combines presence and verbal skills which engender confidence and achieve understanding irrespective of the setting, situation, or size of the group addressed. Displays an intuitive sense of when and how to listen. | N/O |

A ☐   B ☐   C ☐   D ☐   E ☐   F ☐   G ☐   H ☐

JUSTIFICATION:

1. Marine Reported On:				2. Occasion and Period Covered:		
a. Last Name	b. First Name	c. MI	d. SSN	a.OCC	b. From	To

G. INTELLECT AND WISDOM

1. PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION (PME). Commitment to intellectual growth in ways beneficial to the Marine Corps. Increases the breadth and depth of warfighting and leadership aptitude. Resources include resident schools; professional qualifications and certification processes; nonresident and other extension courses; civilian educational institution coursework; a personal reading program that includes (but is not limited to) selections from the Commandant's Reading List; participation in discussion groups and military societies; and involvement in learning through new technologies.

ADV	Maintains currency in required military skills and related developments. Has completed or is enrolled in appropriate level of PME for grade and level of experience. Recognizes and understands new and creative approaches to service issues. Remains abreast of contemporary concepts and issues.	PME outlook extends beyond MOS and required education. Develops and follows a comprehensive personal program which includes broadened professional reading and/or academic course work; advances new concepts and ideas.	Dedicated to life-long learning. As a result of active and continuous efforts, widely recognized as an intellectual leader in professionally related topics. Makes time for study and takes advantage of all resources and programs. Introduces new and creative approaches to services issues. Engages in a broad spectrum of forums and dialogues.	N/O

A	B	C	D	E		G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. DECISION MAKING ABILITY. Viable and timely problem solution. Contributing elements are judgment and decisiveness. Decisions reflect the balance between an optimal solution and a satisfactory, workable solution that generates tempo. Decisions are made within the context of the commander's established intent and the goal of mission accomplishment. Anticipation, mental agility, intuition, and success are inherent.

ADV	Makes sound decisions leading to mission accomplishment. Actively collects and evaluates information and weighs alternatives to achieve timely results. Confidently approaches problems; accepts responsibility for outcomes.	Demonstrates mental agility; effectively prioritizes and solves multiple complex problems. Analytical abilities enhanced by experience, education, and intuition. Anticipates problems and implements viable, long-term solutions. Steadfast, willing to make difficult decisions.	Widely recognized and sought after to resolve the most critical, complex problems. Seldom matched analytical and intuitive abilities; accurately foresees unexpected problems and arrives at well-timed decisions despite fog and friction. Completely confident approach to all problems. Masterfully strikes a balance between the desire for perfect knowledge and greater tempo.	N/O

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. JUDGMENT. The discretionary aspect of decision making. Draws on core values, knowledge, and personal experience to make wise choices. Comprehends the consequences of contemplated courses of action.

ADV	Majority of judgments are measured, circumspect, relevant, and correct.	Decisions are consistent and uniformly correct, tempered by consideration of their consequences. Able to identify, isolate and assess relevant factors in the decision making process. Opinions sought by others. Subordinates personal interests in favor of impartiality.	Decisions reflect exceptional insight and wisdom beyond this Marine's experience. Counsel sought by all; often an arbiter. Consistent, superior judgment inspires the confidence of seniors.	N/O

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

JUSTIFICATION:

H. FULFILLMENT OF EVALUATION RESPONSIBILITIES

1. EVALUATIONS. The extent to which this officer serving as a reporting official conducted, or required others to conduct, accurate, uninflated, and timely evaluations.

ADV	Occasionally submitted untimely or administratively incorrect evaluations. As RS, submitted one or more reports that contained inflated markings. As RO, concurred with one or more reports from subordinates that were returned by HQMC for inflated marking.	Prepared uninflated evaluations which were consistently submitted on time. Evaluations accurately described performance and character. Evaluations contained no inflated markings. No reports returned by RO or HQMC for inflated marking. No subordinates' reports returned by HQMC for inflated marking. Few, if any, reports were returned by RO or HQMC for administrative errors. Section Cs were void of superlatives. Justifications were specific, verifiable, substantive, and where possible, quantifiable and supported the markings given.	No reports submitted late. No reports returned by either RO or HQMC for administrative correction or inflated markings. No subordinates' reports returned by HQMC for administrative correction or inflated markings. Returned procedurally or administratively incorrect reports to subordinates for correction. As RO nonconcurred with all inflated reports.	N/O

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

JUSTIFICATION:

1. Marine Reported On:				2. Occasion and Period Covered:		
a. Last Name	b. First Name	c. MI	d. SSN	a.OCC	b. From	To

I. DIRECTED AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

J. CERTIFICATION

1. I CERTIFY that to the best of my knowledge and belief all entries made hereon are true and without prejudice or partiality and that I have provided a signed copy of this report to the Marine Reported on.

_____
(Signature of Reporting Senior)

(Date in YYYYMMDD format)

2. I ACKNOWLEDGE the adverse nature of this report and

☐ I have no statement to

☐ I have attached a

_____
(Signature of Marine Reported On)

(Date in YYYYMMDD format)

K. REVIEWING OFFICER COMMENTS

1. OBSERVATION: ☐ Sufficient   ☐ Insufficient   2. EVALUATION: ☐ Concur   ☐ Do Not Concur

3. COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT: Provide a comparative assessment of potential by placing an "X" in the appropriate box. In marking the comparison, consider all Marines of this grade whose professional abilities are known to you personally.

DESCRIPTION		COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT
THE EMINENTLY QUALIFIED MARINE	☐	
ONE OF THE FEW EXCEPTIONALLY QUALIFIED MARINES	☐ ☐	
ONE OF THE MANY HIGHLY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS WHO FORM THE MAJORITY OF THIS GRADE	☐ ☐ ☐	
A QUALIFIED MARINE	☐	
UNSATISFACTORY	☐	

4. REVIEWING OFFICER COMMENTS: Amplify your comparative assessment mark; evaluate potential for continued professional development to include: promotion, command, assignment, resident PME, and retention; and put Reporting Senior marks and comments in perspective.

5. I CERTIFY that to the best of my knowledge and belief all entries made hereon are true and without prejudice or partiality.

_____
(Signature of Reviewing Officer)

(Date in YYYYMMDD format)

6. I ACKNOWLEDGE the adverse nature of this report and

☐ I have no statement to

☐ I have attached a

_____
(Signature of Marine Reported On)

(Date in YYYYMMDD format)

L. ADDENDUM PAGE

ADDENDUM PAGE ATTACHED: ☐ YES

NAVMC 10835E (Rev. 10-99) (EF VER 1.0))
SN: 0109-LF-069-1000

PAGE 5 OF 5

101

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